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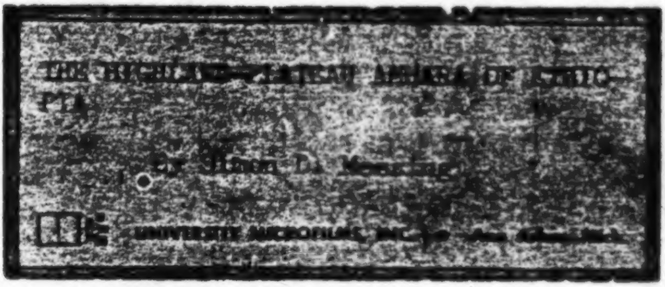

THE HIGHLAND-PLATEAU AMHARA OF ETHIOPIA

By Simon D. Messing

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THE HIGHLAND-PLATEAU AMHARA OF ETHIOPIA

Simon D.avid Messing

A DISSERTATION
in Anthropology

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

1957

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Note on Methodology

121 The methods of ethnography, which constitute the basic method
123 used in gathering the data for this report, had to be followed with considerable discretion, while in Ethiopia. Care had to be taken to avoid misunderstandings and loss of confidence among the inhabitants who view study by outsiders with misgivings.

132 Careful preparation by the author included brief but intensive study of the Amharic language, including writing and grammar; letters of introduction from a scholar who has the confidence of the emperor; lengthy procedures in governmental offices in Addis Ababa to obtain permission and passes to travel to the hinterland where the old culture is little changed by modern contacts.

121 In planning the field project under such circumstances, the author deemed it advisable to formulate his objectives in general rather than specific terms; to assume a flexible and patient attitude; to do what was possible; to establish a base-line of ethnographic information and initial analysis.

122 Procedures in the field included travel by mule to various rural
hamlets. This was necessary due to regional differences in culture
traits, notably in the ethnic division of labor. Travel is possible
only in the dry season, October to mid-June. A guide-interpreter was
123 secured in the town of Gondar, where English is taught in the new
124 elementary school. His services became increasingly valuable in inter-
viewing, checking observations and information for reliability and
validity; and, by no means least, in establishing rapport with people
in the region, most of whom knew his father well. For the guide's
father was the local "woggäsha" (native surgeon-herbologist-empiricist).

722 Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

127 other observers, past and present, in the English, Franch, German and Italian languages. He has consulted, in addition to three American libraries (University of Pennsylvania, New York Public, Library of Congress), the British Museum, the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, Bern University, libraries in Florence, Rome, and the small but increasingly valuable library at the University College of Addis Ababa. He has secured offprints of articles on the subject, published in obscure publications, from Orientalists such as Paul Geuthner, in Paris. He has brought back from Ethiopia about a thousand Kodachrome and black-and-white photographs, and pottery, musical instruments and other artifacts, to add to the documentary evidence.

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Table 14: Chronology of Ethiopian History

Historical Beginnings in the Area : Early Contacts

2900 B.C.	Region of Nubia conquered by Pharao Zoser, 3rd Dynasty of Egypt. He imports gold and copper from "Punt" (apparently Somaliland).
2625 B.C.	Troglodyte (cave-dwelling) trubes expelled by rulers of the Egyptian 6th Dynasty, from the edge of the "eastern desert"; recorded by the Palermo stone.
1500-1000 B.C.	Nubia under Egyptian Dynastic rule.
1000 B.C.(about)	Many Egyptian priestly families flee southward after an unsuccessful revolt against the 21st Dynasty of Egypt. They carry the worship of Amon from Thebes to Nubia, now independent, and into Ethiopia proper, attempting to reproduce the Amonite Theocracy in their new home.
950 B.C.	Approximate period of visit of the legendary Queen of Sheba To King Solomon in Jerusalem, according to the Abyssinian Royal Chronicles which link this to the Biblical account.
750 B.C.(about)	Full development of the Nubian Kingdom of Napata, site of the former Egyptian frontier station for trade with the Sudan. The local dynasty of kings probably descended from the priestly refugees from Thebes.
722-663 B.C.	Kings of Napata rule over Egypt as the 25th Dynasty of Egypt Greek writers refer to this Napata Kingdom as the "Ethiopian Theocracy".
670-622 B.C.	Assyrian kings conquer Egypt, force out the Nubian Dynasty. As a result, Napata Kingdom moves southward to a new capital known as Meroe, withdraws from northern contacts.
599 B.C.	Cyrus II is enthroned, and later takes Egypt, Arabia, and penetrates to the borders of Abyssinia, establishing trade routes and contacts that outlast his conquests.
525 B.C.	Cambyses fails to conquer Kingdom of Meroe. End of Direct Persian contacts with Ethiopia.

Origin and Development of the Abyssinian Kingdom of Axum (Aksum).

1300 B.C.	Approximate period of the development of civilizations in the Hadhramaut and neighboring areas of southwest Arabia: Irrigation of fields, dams; spice trade to Egypt; the Himyarite written alphabet "musnad"; religious temple worship to the Moon god with the motif of crescent and disk. Kingdoms of Saba, Ma'in, Qataban, Ausan, and later, Marib.

500 B.C.(about)	Beginning of series of invasions and colonization of northern Abyssinia by Gees-speaking Himyarites from the Hadhramaut. They introduce the scratch plow, stone Cisterns, stone houses, and the spice trade. Later, to carry spices from the Abyssinian upland through the desert to the Red Sea port of Adulis (the modern Zula), the Himyarites introduce the camel.
247-223 B.C.	Ptolemy Euergetes of Egypt extends his Graeco-Egyptian empire southward along the Red Sea as far as Adulis (Zula). Greek inscriptions found later at this Abyssinian port recount his campaigns.
80 A.D.	Continued contact with the Greek and Roman Mediterranean through ships plying the Red Sea, reported by Periplus, Alexandria merchant.
200-300 A.D.	Hadhramaut motherland of the Abyssinian colonists comes under the dominance of the Kingdom of Saba. The colonists set up own capital at Axum, in northern Abyssinia.
270 A.D.	Axumite Abyssinians invade the mother country in Arabia Felix.
330 A.D.(about)	Syrian Christian missionaries reach the court of Axum and convert the royal family and some nobles to Christianity. Abyssinian tradition of St. Frumentius, who was appointed "Abuna", Bishop of Abyssinia, with the title "Abba Salama" (Father of Peace) by the Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt.
378 A.D.	With the zeal of new converts, the Axumites invade Arabia Felix once again, to "protect opressed Christians" there, but are driven back by the rulers of Yemen. Christianity at Axum receives a setback.
450 A.D.(abt.)	Inscriptions in the Axumite Kingdom of this period record that King Tzana (or Tazana) began his rule as a worshipper of Astar and of Mahrem, but ended as a Christian. He is referred to as the Constantine of Abyssinia.
449 A.D.	The Monophysite Doctrine (Christ's nature one) forms at Council of Ephesus, in contradiction to the earlier Nicene Council. The next year, at the Council of Chalcedon, the Monophysites break away and form a separate church. The Abyssinian church, as branch of the Coptic church of Alexandria, joins the Monophysites, breaks contact with the Roman church.
500 A.D.(abt.)	Arrival in Abyssinia of the legendary "nine saints", probably Syrian monks, who reinforce Christianity at Axum. They are referred to in Abyssinian literature as "Qedusan Romaweyan" (lit. Roman Saints), but were apparently Monophysites. The Bible is translated from Greek into Gees, for although Greek was the court language at Axum, the people still spoke Gees, even most of the nobles.

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525 A.D.	With renewed Christian seal, the Axumite King Kaleb invades Yemen to "protect opressed Christians", and defeats King D'hu Nuwas of Yemen. Returning Abyssinian soldiers carry much booty from Yemen to Abyssinia, but in return introduce the coffee bean and the drug leaf qat (çhaṭ) into Yemen, where both are soon planted and become popular.
550 A.D.(abt)	Travels and writings of Cosmas, who finds the old Greek inscriptions at Adulis. Greek and Roman ships ply the Red Sea.
570 A.D.	Christian Abyssinians have reached the outskirts of Mecca, but are defeated there and finally driven out of Asia for the last time.

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687 A.D.	War between Abyssinia and Nubia.
644 A.D.	Alexandria, spiritual center of Monophysite Copts, conquered by the Muslims. Because Monophysites had protected early Muslim refugees, Mohammed had promised them protection. Therefore, though cut off from the Mediterranean by the Muslim tide for the next millenium, Christian Abyssinia remains under the spiritual jurisdiction of Alexandria.
950 A.D.(abt)	Gradual breakup of the Kingdom of Axum, due to regional rebellions and movements for local independence, sometimes motivated in part by religious differences. Abyssinian Royal Chronicles record uprising of the exiled Falashas (who follow Mosaic Judaism) under their Queen Judith, which lasted 40 years.
990-1260	Christian Warlord Zagwe and his dynasty rule from new capital at Lasta. There, King Lalibäla builds the remarkable rock-hewn churches existing to this day. Zagwe kings compromise with the Coptic church by permitting foreign (Egyptian) Abuna as its head in Abyssinia. But the so-called "Solomonic line" claiming descent from Axum and favored by the Abyssinian church continues somewhat further south in Abyssinia, as the Kingdom of Shoa.
1177 A.D.	King of Abyssinia known in the Western world as "Prester John" is asked by Pope Alexander III to participate in the attempt to conquer Jerusalem. But the Muslim area in between makes this impossible.

Hegemony of the "Solomonic Line" of the Kingdom of Shoa; the Amhara emerge.

1260 A.D.	The "Solomonic" King of Shoa, Yekuno Amlak, becomes "King of Kings" of Abyssinia, with aid of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia. The head of the church, Abuna Takla Haymanot, receives one-third of the land of the empire as reward to the church, and proceeds to build monasteries, notably the (still existing) one at Däbra Libanos in Shoa. Zealous monks accompany troops in regional warfare and force conversions in some instances. Amharic, the language spoken by the people of Shoa as vulgate of Gees and Cushitic,

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	supplants Geez as the spoken language of Abyssinia.
1314-1344	King 'Amda Sion rules Abyssinia, during a period of increasing contact with Arab neighbors: militarily hostile, but enriching the literature of Abyssinia. The Arabs gain footholds in Somaliland in the South, with the Dankali in the east, and Sudanese and Nilotic tribes to the northwest. Meanwhile Arabic and Coptic translations into Geez include the Book of Adam and Eve. To link the Shoa Dynasty directly to the "Solomonic Dynasty" of Solomon and Sheba, the book "Kebra Nagast", (Glory of the Kings) is composed during this period. Translations from Arabic include epics, liturgies, fables, romances; some via the Coptic church in Alexandria which is now Arabic-speaking.
1434-1468	Rule of King Zar'a Ya'Qob. Continued intermittent warfare against Muslim pressure at the borders, also against Shanqalla tribes and Falashas, to safeguard holy manuscripts against burning by Muslims, Copic monks hide many on islands in Lake Tana, e.g. on Daga Estefanos. Translations from the Arabic include "Tamra Maryam", Miracles of Mary. Contact with Arabs brings luxury items such as perfumes in glass bottles and marroquin leather (hence "arabeña" for leatherworker).
1468-1478	Rule of King Baede-Mariam. Royal Abyssinian Chronicles report continued intermittent warfare.
1478-1494	Rule of King Eskender. During his reign a second Portuguese Delegation arrives and finds the leader of the first Delegation, Pedro de Cavilham (sent some decades earlier by Prince Henry the Navigator to the "cinnamon and like spices" land of "Prester John") still alive, though aged. He had been hospitably received, but not been permitted to return home, and had taken an interest in Abyssinian church paintings.
1508-1540	Rule of King Lebna Dengel. Hard-pressed by Muslim invasions from the southeast, the king manages to send the Armenian Mathaeus to Portugal, asking for help. The messenger reaches Portugal in 1513.
1520-1527	Portuguese embassy arrives in Abyssinia, led by Father Alvarez. Portuguese begin attempts to convert the royal court to Roman Catholicism. Upon return to Portugal in 1527, Father Alvarez writes his memoirs, describing the culture of Shoa and Axum, the tent-city capital of the King and his nobles.
1530-1540	Invasion of Abyssinia by the Emir of Harrar, Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, better known as "Grañ" (left-handed). With the aid of a new weapon, Turkish firearms ("turk basha"), he overruns most of Abyssinia, burning monasteries and churches, sacking Axum, and killing King Lebna Dengel in battle in 1540.

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Nomadic, islamized Galla tribes settle in Shoa, take up agriculture. They also take up the habit of coffee-drinking, which Mecca had declared permitted ("hallal") in 1510. Coffee penetrates into Arabia from Abyssinia, through a Sufi Muslim brotherhood.

1540-1559 Rule of King Galaudewos, son of Lebna Dengel. The Chronicles refer to him as Asnaf Sagad I. He barely defends the mountain plateau near Lake Tana, all that is left.

1542 Portuguese aid finally arrives at Massaua harbor under Dom Christofo da Gama, with 400 musketeers. This turns the tide. In 1543, Mohammed Gran is slain in battle. The Portuguese are greatly honored; some settle down and begin families with native girls. Portuguese castles are built at Gorgora, on the northern bank of Lake Tana, also stone bridges over rivers to permit traffic in the rainy season.
Portuguese Jesuits accuse King Galaudewos of "non-Christian" religious customs, but he tolerates their efforts at conversion.
Counter efforts by the coptic clergy lead to regional rebellions.

1545 The Galla tribes use this to invade once more from the southwest but are finally halted. In 1557 the Turks attack from Massaua to Debra Damo.

1559-1563 Rule of King Minas (Wanag Sagad II). Continued internal and external tensions.

1563-1597 Rule of King Sarsa Dengel (Malak Sagad I). Religious polemics between Copts and Catholics stimulate Geez literature. The king sponsors translations of religious novels from the Arabic, (Balaam and Josaphat), and of the "World History" of Abu Shakir, utilizing Yemenites as translators. Original Abyssinian compositions of this period include the work "Hatata" (Researches) by the "lone thinker" Zara Yaqob, son of a poor peasant near Aksum, who developed a theistic religious philosophy after having retired to a cave to think things out. The Coptic clergy condemned the philosophy of this self-taught thinker as "babble", but he became tutor to the son of a nobleman, and his pupil later collaborated with him on this book. Zara Yaqob also wrote some poetry and satire on the polemics of his day (See Littman, 1907, pp. 219-224; Bent, 1903, p. 449).
By 1579 the king feels secure enough to have himself crowned King of Kings at Axum, after halting another Galla invasion in Dembeya. The king reconstructs the Coptic church at Axum. Warfare against the Falashas breaks out in 1581-2, when they are led by Radai, then Kaleb, in Semien province, and in 1585, when Sarsa Dengel defeats their chief, Gushen, at Warq-Amba in Semien and in Woggera province.

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1597-1607	Interregnum follows the death of Sarsa Dengel; there are several contenders for the throne, including ZaDengel, a nephew of the last king, who has become a Catholic. Finally, first with aid of some loyal Galla troops and then with aid of the Portuguese, another descendant of Lebna Dengel, by name of Susneyos, wins.
1607-1632	Rule of King Susneyos. In 1626 the king reluctantly converts to Roman Catholicism, pressed by the impatient Father Alfonso Mendes, who has replaced the patient Father Paes. Civil wars break out immediately, some against the Coptic clergy, some against Falashas upon whom conversion was being urged since they inhabited the area north of Lake Tana to which the center of the kingdom had shifted after the Galla devastation and conquest of Shoa.

The Amhara Center at Gondar.

1632-1667	Rule of King Fasilidas, at Gondar, north of Lake Tana. Immediately upon ascending the throne, this son of Susneyos reversed his father's religious acts, banished all Portuguese from his realm, re-established the power of the Coptic Abyssinian clergy, and thus ended the civil war. Workmen trained by the Portuguese built Fasil's castles further north, at Gondar, and a masonry-enclosed royal pathway to the huge fig tree, under which he regularly judged the people, in Solomonic style. Although he ruled from Gondar, he acknowledged the state religion by being crowned King of Kings at Aksum. He used his military power to subject some of the Galla. His son and successor, Tsadequ Yohannes, built his own castle at Gondar, and that of his Prime Minister is also preserved to this day. He had to subjugate an Amhara rebellion in Gojjam province. Fasil's grandson, King Yadem Segadiyasus, added his own castles at Gondar, and built many churches in the area, some in Qemant country. He was the last castle builder, for the trained masons had died and their art was gradually fading away.

Modern Western Contacts

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1684-1704	The German Scholar Hiob Ludolphus compiles a History of Abyssinia and a Geez dictionary, with the aid of a converted Abyssinian scholar, Abba Gorgoryos, whom he encountered in Rome. Among Portuguese introductions to Abyssinia during their century of residence there, he records manufacture and growing of wine (grape) for the Mass (later lost in Abyssinia).

1768-1773	James Bruce travels about in Abyssinia, and finds the King of Kings still resident at Gondar, the capital. On his return, Bruce carries with him the manuscript "Kĕbrä Nägäst" (Kebir Zanegusta, Glory of the Kings), which recounts the story of the "Solomonic Dynasty".
1813 (about)	Breakup of the Abyssinian Empire, end of Gondar as the nation's capital. There are six provincial kings who recognize no king of kings. Local and regional chiefs and warlords are divided along feudal lines.
1855-1868	Rule of a commoner usurper, warlord Kassa, who has himself crowned Emperor Theodore (Tewodros) at Gondar. He recognised the need to modernize his country, invited German technicians, welcomed British Protestant missionaries. He realized that he could not modernize his country without first centralizing it. He planned to turn his feudal lords into salaried officials, abolish feudal armies and feudal land tenure, limit tolls, limit the temporal power of the church; and gain the respect of the European world by abolishing the slave trade and enforcing Christian (Western) monogamy. However, he could not carry out any of these plans in face of the opposition of the feudal lords and the clergy. Becoming more bitter, dictatorial, frustrated, violent and cruel, especially after the death in battle of his British advisor and friend, Mr. Bell, he sacked Gondar town, where the British Consul Plowden had been murdered by bandits, and later imprisoned British Protestant missionaries. When Lord Napier landed and attacked the fortress Magdalla in Tigre Province where Theodore had organized his defense, Emperor Theodore committed suicide. Shortly before that, the young King of Shoa, Menelik II, held hostage by Theodore, escaped home to Shoa.
1868-1889	The King of Tigre province is crowned King Johannes (John IV), of Abyssinia, with the aid of the Coptic clergy, and the silent acquiescence of Britain which had withdrawn its troops.
1884-1889	The "Derwishes" attack from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, sack Gondar, and kill King John IV in battle. The troops from Shoa arrive too late to save him.

Amhara Rule from Addis Ababa

1889-1913	Rule of Menelik II. He consolidated Abyssinia beyond its old boundaries, conquered all Galla provinces and enclisted them as his loyal troops, especially cavalry, armed with spears and Italian rifles, in addition to his Amhara troops. This army defeated the Italian invaders at Adua in 1896. As a result, many European powers sent diplomatic missions to Addis Ababa, the newly built capital on the Shoa plateau. There, some centralization and modernization began.

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1906	The United States of America establishes a Legation at Addis Ababa.
1913-1916	Rule of the young king Lidj Yasu, grandson of Emperor Menelik II. A playboy king, he annoyed the Coptic clergy by close ties to Muslims, and annoyed the British by his friendship with Turkish agents at the time of World War I. Deposed by the clergy and feudal lords.
1916-1929	Ras (Duke) Tafari Makonnen, whose father had conquered the province of Harar for his relative, Emperor Menelik II, becomes Regent of Abyssinia under the formal rule of Empress Zawditu, daughter of Menelik II. Modern-minded and with a French education, Ras Tafari introduced gradual modernization in Addis Ababa and parts of Harar, including elementary and high schools, prohibition of the slave trade, and as much centralization as his limited power then permitted.
1930	Upon the death of Empress Zawditu, Ras Tafari is crowned King of Kings Haile Selassie. His power and proclaimed changes in administration gradually grow. He proclaims a constitution, changing his actually absolute monarchy into a nominally constitutional one; the new Parliament is appointed, with the expressed hope that some day it can be elective. The emperor changes the name of Abyssinia, officially to Ethiopia.
1936-1941	Italian invasion and occupation. The major change made by the Italians was the building of a network of roads. Their treatment of the Ethiopians was confused, largely because of ambivalent orders from Rome. Amhara guerilla resistance continued in the mountains, and in 1937 an assassination attempt against Marshall Graziani led to a massacre, especially of educated Ethiopians.
May 1941	Return of Emperor Haile Selassie, with greater power than ever before. Centralization of the country proceeds more widely than before, and modernization gradually follows.
1951	Long an advocate of "collective security" in international affairs, Emperor Haile Selassie sends two battalions of his own bodyguard to join the U.N. forces in Korea. The previous year Ethiopia had signed an "umbrella agreement" with the American Point-Four program, for aid in education and agricultural training.
1954	Visit of Emperor Haile Selassie to the U.S.A.
1955	Liberalization of the Ethiopian Constitution by Imperial proclamation. But the modern-educated are still a very small percentage of the population, and the old cultures in the rural areas are still little changed. The nation is still far from homogeneous, though tending in that direction.

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Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	Sept. 11 to Oct. 10	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("ṭeädaye").	place beehive basketwork in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gai").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Bäal")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dämmära). Minor: 1st Mäskäram is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enquṭaṭash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
Ṭeqemt 1 to Ṭeqemt 30	Oct. 11 to Nov. 9	sunny growing & ripening season (sämmänä sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("geba"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("ṭälla"); sell honey to make mead ("Ṭäj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Ṭeqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebel" holy wells and waterfalls of Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abo).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("guremrenosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jerusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Ṭeqemt 23rd).

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "ṭyöff" for bread; "nug" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwusqwam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Zion" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "ṭyeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus" coming), esp. at Qulubi near Dire Dawa. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledät", or "Gänna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gänna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).		19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Qulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.
Ṭer 1 to Ṭer 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bälg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shembera), plant (gomän) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ṭer is "Ṭemqät"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gezrät"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Astärye Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("guge") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary Pentecost ("mayrär") among Falashas as harvest fest. 12th secondary	On Epiphany, Jan. 19th (11th Ṭer), Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in traditional costume.

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Yäkatit I to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("ebed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day Fast of Niniweh ("Tsomä Nänäwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit I to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" =(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("ḥemamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent, "seqlät" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fassika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tensaē") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, as unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("mänälas bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: deadwood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "senro" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, outdoor picnic, under "dass" shelter 24th: "Täklä Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Däbrä Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while older ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
Sänye 1 to Sänye 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Kerämt" begin: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then tyeff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Parāqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "tsomā hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "erf mäṭay", with fried fish, beer, "azmari" music, and "hetu" dance. Mutual aid in hut repair.	
Hamlē 1 to Hamlē 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July23) Birthday ("Ledät") of Emp. Haile Selassie; praise hymns changed in churches.

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Nähasē 1 to Nähasē 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of tyëff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debrä Tabor) feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger childred badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his namesake; flags, etc.
Pagumen1 2 3 4 5	Sept. 6 7 8 9 10	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Nägadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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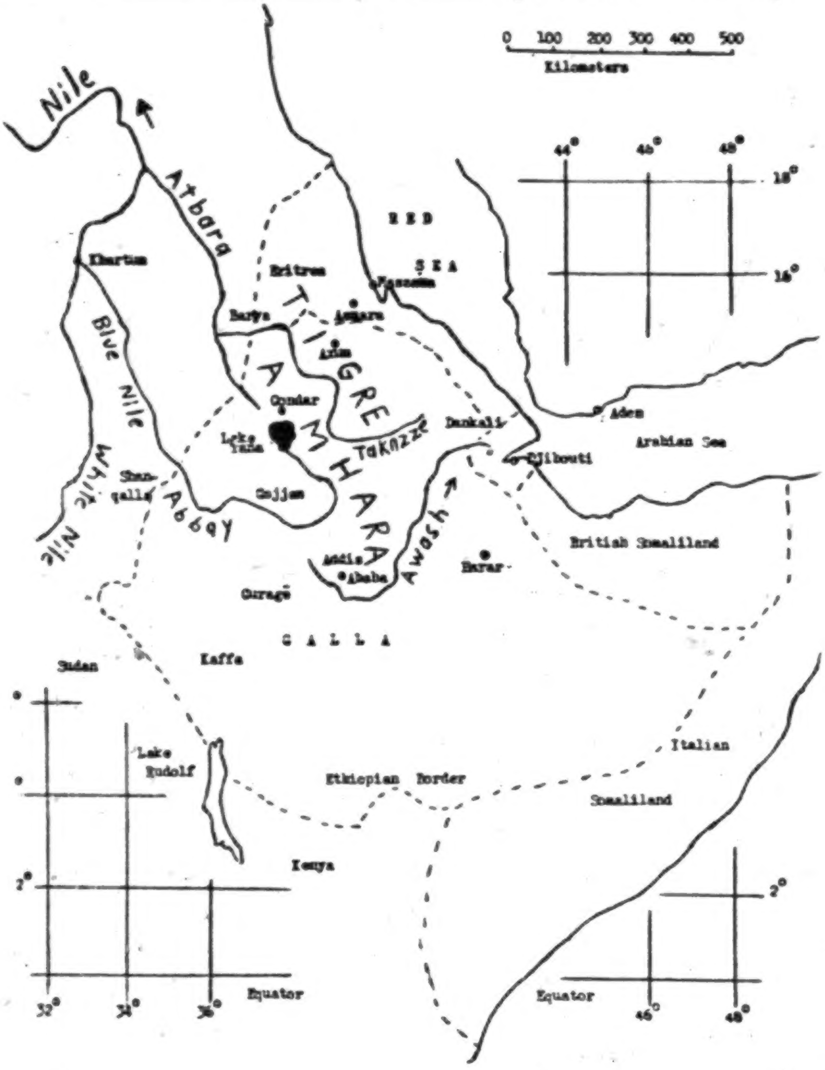
Simplified Ethno-linguistic Map of Ethiopia

[Roman No. 50]


0 100 200 300 400 500
Kilometers
Nile
Atbara
Khartum
Blue Nile
White Nile
Eritrea
TIGRE
Barya
Asmara
Axum
Massawa
RED SEA
AMHARA
Gondar
Lake Tana
Takazze
Dankali
Aden
Arabian Sea
Djibouti
Shan-galla
Gojjam
Abbay
Addis Ababa
Awash
Harar
British Somaliland
Gurage
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Introduction: Thematic Synopsis

121 On the fertile highland plateau of the "horn of Africa" and straddling the Great Rift Valley, ancient Abyssinia culturally bridges the Middle East and Africa. Here, the peasant society of the Amhara, despite a very primitive technology, enjoys a complex spiritual culture. Amhara culture is the subject of this report.

[114] Most of the material to be presented was gathered by the author during field work in Ethiopia in 1953-54, after brief, though intensive study of the Amharic language. The district of Gondar, north and northeast of Lake Tana, was chosen for intensive study because it was never conquered by the culturally more African Galla tribes, when they overran and populated most of old Abyssinia in the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries A. D. The fierce pride of the "Gondarey" has caused him to preserve the old culture more than have inhabitants of other districts.

In organizing and analyzing the data, the author's purpose has been:

1. To regard the web of activities with reference to ecology, division of labor, and standards of living.

2. To pay great attention to historical depth and local involvement with other ethnic groups. Historical considerations cannot be ignored in a study of Abyssinian culture; and consideration of ethnic relationships is, if for no other reason, necessitated by the ethnic division of labor in the

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Amhara area, and also by the fact of considerable regional cultural variation among the Amhara people.

3. To describe culture traits and social institutions as they function, and also to show how the Amhara people themselves feel about them; how they see themselves in relation to neighboring groups and in relation to the human and non-human environment in general.

The author will also offer some tentative conclusions about ethos, cultural foci, and the dynamics of Amhara culture.

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PART I: Land, History and People

1. General Orientation:

A. Definition of Terms:

The Amhara culture dealt with in this study is to a considerable extent identified with the culture formerly [171] referred to as "Abyssinian". Actually, the Abyssinian culture, heir to the cultural blending of ancient Semitic and African traits, has developed into several sub-cultures of which the Amhara culture is the major one. Another important sub-culture would be that of the Tigre-speaking population of Eritrea.

The term "Abyssinia", which was the official name of the country until the 20th century, is possibly derived from the name the centrally-located river Awash, which flows in the Rift Valley bisecting the country, losing itself in the eastern lowland desert on its way to the Red Sea coast. Another explanation derives it from the Habashat, one of the Semitic tribes from Hadhramaut, which crossed over the Bab El Mandeb about 500 B.C. A third explanation derives the name from the Arabic term signifying racial mixture.

The present Emperor preferred the official name Ethiopia, the political frontiers of which include the territory of non-Abyssinian peoples like the Galla, conquered by Abyssinia in the late 19th century. "Ethiopia", derived from the Greek term signifying "people with sunburned faces", was used in classical antiquity to describe all Africa south of the Sahara.

TM The religion of the Amhara and most other "Abyssinian" peoples is an early, Monophysite form of Christianity, often

779 referred to as "Coptic", although the Abyssinian Copts prefer the term "Towado" meaning Orthodox. The term Copt is derived from the Greek term for "Egyptian." Since the Coptic Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt, was also head of the Abyssinian Church and appointed all Abyssinian archbishops until recent years of the reign of the present Emperor, there is some justification for the use of the term Coptic. It will be so used in this study, to indicate the "Abyssinian Church of Ethiopia".

In books on Ethiopia, one often finds the term "Amhara"
101 used in a broad sense as synonymous with Abyssinian Coptic Christian. Although the Amhara in their ethnocentrism also use it in this sense, it is not good usage in the author's opinion. The Tigrinya-speaking peoples of the province of
[181] Tigre are also good "Copts", in religious belief and observance; however, they differ from the Amhara in many phases of culture, and, according to native opinion, in personality". Therefore, the term Amhara is used in this study only for the Amharic-speaking, Coptic population of the provinces of Begemdir(Gondar), Gojjam, and parts of Shoa. Formerly, all three provinces were included in a territorial unit called Amhara; hence the name.

B. Linguistic Definitions

There are three major linguistic families in Ethiopia:
197 Cushitic, Semitic and Nilotic. Cushitic is predominant, roughly speaking, in the southern half of modern Ethiopia, including Galla, Somali, Sidamo, Agau, etc. Nilotic languages predominate along the northern and western escarp-

197 ment leading to the Sudan, including Baria (the term for
slave in Amharic), Kunama, etc. *Semitic* languages spoken
in Ethiopia (mainly in the northern half of the country),
are referred to by linguists as "Ethiopic", and are derived
from the Geez language which entered Ethiopia in the first
half of the first millenium B.C.

Geez ceased to be a spoken language in the 14th century A.D., though it survives in the Abyssinian Coptic liturgy to this day, and was the language of religious, historical and grammatical documents almost until the present generation.

Of the daughter-languages of Geez, *Tigrē*, spoken in Northern Eritrea, remains the closest to the mother tongue. Its literature is recent, much of it due to the efforts of Swedish missionaries since the 19th century. The same can be said of the literature of the nearest linguistic relative, *Tigrinya*, spoken in southern Eritrea and in the Ethiopian province of Tigre. These linguistic and territorial names should not be confused.

Amharic, the present national language of Ethiopia, has
171 been important since the 14th century A.D. when the earliest
177 available Amharic document, "Songs of the Kings," was written.
538 The first scientific grammar of Amharic was written in the
17th century by a European scholar, Ludolf. Not until the
20th century has literature in Amharic slowly developed.
Amharic is partly derived from Geez, but contains a strong
substratum of Cushitic (Leslau, 1945 a). Amharic predominates
on the plateau of northwest-central Ethiopia.

191 Other spoken languages partly derived from Geez are now
177 spoken only by small groups of the population, and are disap-

pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

131 The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15° north latitude, and 33°-43° east longitude. Prior to the federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq. miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000 sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

133 It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has enabled the plateau people to retain their independence against would-be invaders.

631 Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

191 Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the national language has recently become the lingua franca for the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 132

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

Ethiopia. The uplands, even though they lie close to the 132 equator, are pleasantly cool at night during the long dry season, and abundant monsoon rains from the Indian Ocean pour down between June and September.

Rainfall averages approximately 47 inches annually at Addis Ababa[1] and considerably more in the area around Lake Tana. An average of 81% of the rain falls during the three-month rainy season, and about 13% during the irregular light [312] rains in April and May.[2] The water-table remains high during most of the dry season, even when most rivers have dried up, so that irrigation and terrace farming are possible. Both have been practiced, though neither extensively nor intensively, since ancient times.

The Amhara divides the climatic year into the long dry 184 season, B̈alg, which lasts until the beginning of the "little 805 rains", and the 3 to 4 month rainy season, kerämt, which the modern-educated Amhara translates as "winter". Terms subdividing these seasons differ locally, which is not surprising considering the extent to which climate is dominated by local topography.

While the long dry season is climatically monotonous, 132 the rainy season is in daily, dramatic flux. It is the season of tornadoes, often dangerous. On a relatively dry day during the rainy season, usually in the early afternoon, a whirlwind (called Täro) may occur which can even

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1. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No.12, May 1947, 4 pp.
2. Hann, Jul: Handbuch der Klimatologie, 1908-1911, Vol.2, p. 181.

132 take the corrugated iron roofs off urban houses. Most tornadoes do not hit the ground, but if they do there is destruction. Usually such a cyclone precedes a heavy rainstorm.

The fog in the rainy season, called "*gum*", is cold and thick and covers the countryside. On the other hand, the fog that precedes the light rains of April and May, called *gag* or *tegag*, is milky, light, and causes very humid heat. Metereologists believe that it is the result of the sand raised by the hot "simoun" wind blowing from Arabia and the eastern lowlands of Ethiopia.

821 The importance of "rain in season" is of course an urgent concern of people living in a primarily agricultural economy. An unseasonal fall, which occasionally arrives after the end of the rainy season, when the grown grain begins to ripen, is called sabbiya, and is highly unpopular. The proverb, to indicate "all things in their proper time", refers to seasonal rains:

> "In (the month of) Hamlē, beating-down rain;
> in (the month of) Sänyē, fine drizzle."

At the beginning of the rainy season, in Sanye, the farmer wishes for constant drizzle, wetting the ground just enough to enable him to make headway with his scratch-plow and to seed in the previously sunbaked soil; in Hamlē, he wishes for plentiful rain so that the sprouting grain will grow fast and tall.

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241 The Abyssinians themselves long ago recognized three distinct climatic zones in their country:

132 137 241 Dega - more than 8,000 feet above sea level; cold, with average temperatures of 50° - 61° F. The dega is primarily prairie grassland, strewn with many medium-sized wooded areas of the high mountain type. The area is particularly adapted for raising livestock, but also suitable for growing barley, wheat, tieff (a variety of millet), beans flax, and temperate fruit, which are gathered wild not long after the end of the rains. Trees include the wild olive (Olea chrysophylla), juniper (Juniperus procera), the medicinal Kosso tree (Hegenia abyssinica).

Woyna Dega - between 6,000 and 8,000 feet: temperate to warm, with average temperatures of 61° - 68° F. This climatic zone includes the greater part of the plateau country, and most of the populated and cultivated lands. This is the zone where most cereals are grown, including soft grains, barley, tieff, maize. Here coffee grows wild. Forests, where they occur, are thicker, but spiny bushes are more prevalent. At the lower levels there are thick stands of bamboo (Podocarpus) and East African hardwoods; at the higher levels are juniper varieties. Most Amhara live in this zone. [361]

132 137 Qolla - below 5,000 feet: hot. with average temperatures in the 70's, 80's and 90's F. The qolla includes the arid lowland zones, as well as tropical forest; river valleys like that of the Awash; and MOST border areas of the country.

137 most border areas of the country. This is the zone of desert and thorn shrub vegetation; flora include the tamarind, giant sycamore, acacia, myrtle and zizygium, "Insett" (musa ensete or "Koba"), euphorbia, depending on availability of water. Crops include cotton, tobacco, dura, sugar cane. Poisonous snakes, leopards, malarial mosquitoes are common, and therefore the qolla is avoided by upland peoples like the Amhara. The qolla is loosely populated by hardy nomads like the feared Danakil in the east, and by Nilotic-speaking and negroid peoples like the Shanqalla in the western lowland.[3]

133 Much of Ethiopia is a subtabular plateau about 7,000 feet high, bisected north and south by a sector of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa with an average width of 30 miles. Rivers such as the Blue Nile have cut deep gorges breaking the highland into many isolated parts. Above the plateau rise higher mountains, the highest of which is 14,500 feet--Ras Dashan(Bejeda).

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133 The many steep canyons which break up the plateaus have made Ethiopia almost inaccessible in the past. There are only three possible routes of access, an important consideration when one tries to reconstruct the ethnic prehistory of this area:

(1) The Eritrean gateway, where the highland approach

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3. See Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook, 1954, pp. 127-8; KUO, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons 1951, p. 63

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the sea. It is here, as C. S. Coon points out,[4] that all the historic traffic between the Ethiopian highlands and Yemen has taken place; here lie all the ancient cities and holiest places. Semitic-speaking influences came this way.

(2) Sailing down the Nile with the north wind, and continuing south past the gorges of the Blue Nile. Despite the hardships of this route, Egypt has often been a source of cultural influence on Ethiopia, and once an Ethiopian dynasty reigned over Egypt. Today, Nilotic-speaking tribes live on this gateway.

(3) A route from the south, at the place where the highland of Ethiopia connects with the grasslands and parklands of Kenya and Uganda. Here we find a continuum of flora and fauna, and a human ethnic continuum. Cushitic-speaking peoples have entered this way, probably for ages past.

C. Soil and Minerals

134 The soil of Ethiopia can be roughly divided into three major types:

(1) Decomposed volcanic rock on the central plateau. This is very fertile, of black or dark brown color.

(2) Alluvial soil on the flood plains of streams. This is derived mainly from the decomposed volcanic rock, washed out of the plateau soil during the rainy season, and is very fertile. Muddy in color, the rich overflow of Lake Tana is

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4. Coon, C. S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished.

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[326] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna: their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

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241 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

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[5] Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial
development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the
highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in
the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It
was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from
coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's
most important export. Other major exports include sundried
hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly
because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
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[6] US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

137 241 [248] **koba** (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples". 262 [186]

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 313 The two most important trees of the highlands are the Ṭed and the Zegba. The Ṭed, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba (Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

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7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Luo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons: Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

137 areas, the wild olive, *wäyra*, is preferred, because it is
313 available, a hardwood, yet not difficult to split. Ease of splitting is always a most important consideration because of the population's simple tools and disinclination to expend effort to change what nature provides. Another olive, the wanza (Cordia abyssinica, a coarsely porous light wood), is popular for smoking out beer jars and other pottery before and after use. The yellow, cherry-like olive is one of the available wild fruit trees.

On lower levels of plateau elevation, the acacia known as *grar* is found in many varieties, often as the "umbrella tree". Generally the wood is hard, used in construction, and even more popular as fuel, especially as charcoal for firing pottery. Lowland trees include the termite-resistant Natal yellow pine, the giant sycamore, mimosa(also called *grar*), gum trees, lemon, and a small size banana.

137 One of the most popular trees, especially in the larger
824 centers of population on the plateau, was imported by Em-
177 peror Menelik II about half a century ago: the odoriferous, water-holding eucalyptus, called *bahēr zaf* (lit. the tree from overseas). Although there are no real forests of it, it is the most noticeable tree in Ethiopia, planted around houses, in wooded clumps between urban sections, towering above the native plateau trees. It grows so fast that in some areas it can be "harvested", primarily for construction purposes, after only five years.

137 A common sight on lower slopes is the euphorbia, *gul-*
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824 *qwal*, which resembles an immense, spiny chandelier with multiple branches. Its milky sap is used in some native

137 remedies. The nutmeg tree, ṭoṣiya, is also medicinal, and
924 the Kosso tree is widely used against tapeworm. Common sights include the reddish ret, a cactus; and just as soon as the rainy season ends, the yellow daisy, adäy abäba carpets the landscape, heralding the masqal holiday. Hence it is also called mäsqäl abäba. A study of the FAUNA connec-
136 tions between Ethiopia and surrounding areas contributes significantly to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures from ancient times to the present.

The last remnant of the prehistoric belt of tropical forest that once stretched from Africa to India, is found today in Dhofar, Southern Arabia. There, in the Gara mountains, Bertram Thomas collected fossil fauna which is definitely Ethiopic and which also evidences links to southern India.[8] Animal husbandry in Yemen in prehistoric times was apparently based on hump-necked cattle of Indian origin. This cattle complex reached Africa late, probably as late
[231] as 1000 B.C.[9] To this day, the cattle of Ethiopia is hump-necked, though cave paintings clearly show domestic cattle without humps.

171 Social and religious regulations associated with the
231 cattle complex among the Cushitic-speaking tribesmen of southern Ethiopia, are very similar to sets of the same regulations among the Gara tribesmen of Dhofar. Both despise hunters and artisans, but also consider agriculture a most ignoble occupation.

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8. Coon: Southern Arabia.Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol.20 , 1943, p. 209.
9. Ibid.

224 One of the traits the Amhara shares with the older
culture pattern mentioned above is contempt for those who
live by hunting; though he is proud to show his prowess
against major wild fauna such as the elephant, lion, leopard,
rhinoceros ("awraris"), and, of course, human enemies.
There is no pride in hunting gazelle and other food animals.
They are left to lowland peoples or low-class ethnic groups
[563] like the Woyto, who hunt the hippopotamus ("gummarēy") along
the gorges of the Blue Nile (and formerly also on Lake Tana).

Hunting, in the mind of the Amhara, is connected with such low-elevation jungle areas as.Wolkait, on the northwestern escarpment, where the ecology differs considerable from the highland. Here are thick forest stands, many wild fruits (such as the wild orange), much wild coffee. Cotton is one of the few crops grown there.

Until the reign of the present Emperor, decorations were given to heroes who had killed big game. In fact, up to the end of the 19th century one of the flattering terms of address to the king was "zehon", elephant, considered the king of beasts. (This has since been replaced by the address "Germawi hoy", "Oh Majesty").

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136 Other game hunted in jungle-forest areas such as Wolkait include:

Greater Kudu ("agazän"), one of the largest antelopes in existence, described by Amhares as having the size and shape of an ox. European hunters have measured it as 60" at shoulder height.

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Northeastern Buffalo ("gosha"), fairly small in size, in wet lowlands.

Hartebeest ("tora"), a tall, slimmer antelope with inward-turned horns which the Amhara describes as being big as a zebra, dangerous, but becoming rare.

Wildcats ("demmat"), including the serval cat ("dē̆ro"), hunted for their skins.

Civet cat ("teriñ"), of the mongoose family, trapped for its musk gland.

Leopard ("näbber"), whose beautifully spotted skin is an export item.

Colobus monkey ("gurē̆za"), now one of the protected animals, but still hunted freely in remote jungle areas for its black-and-white coat, sold freely even in the streets of Addis Ababa. From its tail hair the famous "c̣hera" flyswitch is made for the nobles who can afford to pay for it, instead of the horsetail substitute. This coat is also exported.

823 The jungle is regarded by the Amhara as the place of refuge of dangerous bandits, outcasts, and rebels against noble chieftains and kings; also, as the place inhabited by socially inferior ethnic groups; and, spiritually, as the [772] place inhabited by many powerful "zar" spirits (see Part VI, Section 2.). who "ride" leopards and lions and "milk" female elephants.

136 The lowland is also the habitat of poisonous snakes, rare on the upland. They are usually lumped under the name "yäqolla ebāb" (lowland snake), and include the very poisonous cobra ("funjit"). This species is avoided, but the large, non-poisonous python ("zändo") is prized for its skin and is an export item sought out by some hunters.

136 364 A second category of fauna are the animals sometimes referred to by foreigners as the "sanitation squad". They protect the health of the population by cleaning up carcasses of donkeys left dead in their tracks; leftovers from butchering, etc. No one ever hunts these animals, though everyone is familiar with them, as they or their traces are common sights in urban as well as rural areas. It is only since the increase in motor traffic that hyenas no longer penetrate at night into the heart of Addis Ababa itself. These animals include:

136 [825] [754] Hyena ("djebb"), spotted, often quite large, feeds mainly on carrion but on occasion attacks domestic animals, small children, and even shepherds sleeping in the open. In black magic, the hyena is "ridden" by the buda spirit, and many Amhara believe that they can distinguish the call of a real hyena from one into which a blacksmith has turned himself. This is why no one will open his hut at night to a strange. Hyena holes are also found in potter's fields, where the poor and strangers are buried outside churchyards, for hyenas smell out and eat recently buried corpses. Passers-by piously try to fill the holes with stones to prevent the hyenas from returning.

136 Jackal ("qäbbäro"), common north of Lake Tana, near Gondar and in most other parts of Ethiopia. Its nocturnal habits are similar to those of the hyena, and it also burrows into graves.

Vultures ("amora"), This term includes all carrion-eating birds, and other birds of prey. Among Carrion-eaters are: the ever-present, sharp-eyed fork-tailed hawk ("ṭenb amora") which will swoop down and steal meat away from a man in the middle of the town if he is not quick to protect it; a white-bodied water-bird (näc̣h amora) (including the "shemäla", a kind of heron) who competes with fishermen in the rainy season; "warda", the blackbird (merle) that cleans up after human feasts.

Crow ("qura"), named after its cry. This bird is most often seen in back yards or cleaning up the market area after a market day. Thus, a day when no market takes place, is called "Day of the Crow's market" ("yäqura gäbäya"). Pious individuals remember the crow as one of Noah's pets and call a variety that has a white spot on its head, "Noah's crow" (yänoa qura). [825]

136 241 A third category of wild animals includes those that endanger the crops. The farmer sends his children to watch for these from the tops of umbrella trees, and the boys use their fiber-and-pebble slingshots against them. These include:

Baboon ("zendjäro"), very unpopular because a troop can

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241 destroy the crops of a village in a week. Shouting is not sufficient to scare them off when there are many. When the small baboon families held off by the boys threaten to grow into a troop, farmers use their rifles.

Hare ("ṭenchäl") is also called the "enemy of ṭiēff" because it likes to feed on that main crop of the farmer. It is a nocturnal animal, perhaps because of its natural enemies, the ever-present birds of prey.

[712] Yellow Sparrow ("mänäkusit"), lit. "little monk", because its yellow coloring resembles the saffron toga formerly worn by monks.

[825] Flax snake ("yätalba ebāb") is of the light-brown color of flax-seed, on which it likes to feed. It is also called "kurfafeya", because when disturbed, it makes a sound like "fuff". Its bite is considered mildly poisonous by the Amhara but requiring the services of a native "wogäsha" (surgeon), who thus acquires a reputation for his "cure" against this actually non-poisonous snake.

Locust (anbäṭa), occurs less often than the other dangers, but when it comes, in huge swarms of a 3-inch species, the results are devastating, causing major famines. (The usual route of the locust is arrival from the lowland eastern border, through the Great Rift valley (Awash), up the plateau, in January, just after the main harvest. It withdraws to the dry lowlands for egg-

136 241 laying during the little and big rains. But there are many variations.) When it comes, the farmer tries to scare it away by setting fire to fallow fields, stubble, bush and trees.

136 Other wild creatures familiar to the Amhara are Migrating birds which fly north (to "Jerusalem" in the popular mind, actually to Europe) in March and return in October, including the "zorit", a white-bellied, black-backed, red-winged bird, and a variety of stork, called "asa leqami". The Nile Monitor, ("ardjano"), a huge lizard is found along larger rivers, often not far from villages and even towns, and easy to hunt. With its scaly skin and often large size, it resembles a crocodile, with dark stripes and spots on a very white underside. 281] The skin is used to cover better utensils and is exported as "crocodile leather" for bags and shoes. Actual crocodiles are much harder to hunt, in less accessible river gorges in the lowlands. The Guenon Monkey (Ṭọta) is common on lower 231] elevations(where it is also a danger to crops). Its young are sometimes made pets.

136 Insect life is abundant in Ethiopia, varies in type according to elevation, and bears considerable significance to ecology.

136 164 Flies - abundant everywhere, transmitting intestinal and skin infections. They are not interfered with beyond swishing with the fly-switch which, if kept in constant motion, chases out does not kill them.

Fleas ("qunechcha") are very common on humans. Everyone has them most of the time, even in the city.

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They are considered a minor irritation, and are caught and crushed between the finger nails. Sometimes, fleas are carriers of typhus, causing epidemics.

Lice - are not as common on humans, and are associated, in the Amhara view, with unusually insanitary conditions, such as prisons.

Bedbugs ("tenkushit"), of the bloodsucking variety, are very common.

Ticks and mites - are more common and more dangerous in the lowlands, but are also found on the plateau where they cause relapsing fever, endemic in many areas. Ticks also bear typhus.[10]

Mosquitoes ("c̣henqello", or, "teneñ") include 22 species of the Anopheline variety in Ethiopia, are abundant below 4,000 feet, in river valleys and along flooded margins of lakes, where serious fatal malaria epidemics occur from time to time. Thousands died just north of Lake Tana within a few weeks after the rainy season of 1953. The Amhara describes the mosquito as a little insect with a big head; it flourishes at the end of the rainy season.

136 Ants: "gunden", black ant with painful bite;

"gëbrë gudan", black field ant which eats grain but does not sting;

"zëmämit", small red ant with painful sting;

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[10] Simmons, op. cit., 1951, pp. 62-73.

136 "mesẽt", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses,
[776 does not live in colonies. It makes honey
237] which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but
zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "ṭenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

Scorpion ("ginṭ"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides
[152] under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a
[241 251] danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231/ Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very
556 old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

231 [556] livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 494 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which operate on the few Italian-built roads. 491 This modern road network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 433 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in 1954 included:-

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons, [12]

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11. KuD, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

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Since all other production, apart from skins and gold, was negligible by comparison, the ecology of Ethiopia can be characterized as predominantly agricultural and pastoral.

3. History

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A. Prehistory to 500 B.C.; early trade routes; "iron age" in Ethiopia; colonization.

Very little reliable data is available about the prehistory of Ethiopia, since archeological excavations were prohibited until recently. Some prehistory inferences have already been drawn in this study from the geographic position, topography, and linguistic groupings in Ethiopia in historic times.

In reconstructing what is known of Ethiopian prehistory and what tentatively can be inferred and projected backward from earliest historic sources, three procedures can be followed: Interpretation of surface archeological sites; following ancient trade routes; linguistic analysis.

Rock paintings, particularly common on the eastern high plateau of Ethiopia, running from north to south, resemble those found in Lybia.[13] Other rock paintings (some of which were photographed by the author of this study), repeatedly show cattle without humps. This would indicate an early Hamitic population of cattle breeders. Moreover, other rock paintings indicate that the breeders of humped cattle entered via the Bab el Mandeb from Yemen.[14]

[13] Barton, G. A. : Hamitic and Semitic Origins. 1934

[14] Rhotert, Hans: Lybische Felsbilder. 1952

Prehistoric Ethiopia MP4

174 The phallic stones in southern Ethiopia also date from the earlier, Hamitic era, but the elaborate obelisks of Aksum, 90-100 feet tall, with false doors and windows (which have counterparts in ancient Yemen) seem to fall into the Semitic, pre-Christian period of about 500 B.C. - 300 A.D. The obelisks at Aksum are particularly significant because one finds there a gradation from a rough, unhewn stone to the sophisticated, carefully carved 90-foot obelisks. One might add that rock paintings and obelisks indicate an early, probably Hamitic-speaking, culture area that included Yemen, Ethiopia, and Egypt, uniting the Middle East and Africa as if they were one continent.

174 439 487 Certain basic *trade routes* have not changed between Ethiopia and surrounding areas in thousands of years, as Wainwright has pointed out,[15] in relation to the import of iron. Salt had to be brought in from the coast of the Red Sea; frankincense from the hilly groves of the plateau; the ruling class and clergy derived imports of silks and velvets; ivory, gold and slaves were brought from the south and the African interior, and transported to the coast of the Red Sea to pay for the imports. The same trade routes brought wild coffee from the Ethiopian province of Kaffa to the Yemenites and brought the humped zebu cattle to Ethiopia. Trade routes within Africa probably had an even earlier *ecological* significance. Some ecologists believe with Vavilov that some millets, especially the "guinea corn" (the "*mashella*" of the present *Amhara*) originated on

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[15] Wainwright: Early Records (in) Man. July-August, 1942 pp. 84-88.

174 the West Ethiopian plateau and spread westward at an early
439 period; while the plantain banana (musa) spread from East
487 Africa eastward to the East Indies, and a type of yam was
brought back in return.

Some of these trade routes are indicated by Leakey,[16] who points out that about 850 B.C. traders from Abyssinia sold Tel-er-Amarna type glass beads and iron to the more primitive southern peoples of the Gumba Neolithic culture, and obtained ivory and gold in exchange. The Badarians who lived in upper Egypt,[17] probably navigated up the Nile as early as 4000 B.C. Coon[18] believes that foreign trade was given great impetus when the camel was introduced to those Ethiopian areas too dry for donkeys, which enabled the frankincense growers to carry their products from the hilly groves to the sea. But the camel was probably a late improvement in trade, occuring here after 100 A.D.

The kingdom of Napata, located between Ethiopia and Egypt, was founded about 900 B.C., when a Lybian family seized the roads leading southward from Egypt to the gold mines. Driven further southward, the kingdom, which included an earlier, local, non-Negroid population, held its own territory until about 470 B.C. It was then supplanted by its own southern branch at Meroe, more fertile in agriculture and cattle, which persisted for another 650 years.[19]

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[16] Leakey; Journal of East African Natural History Society. 1936,p.70.

[17] Morant: Biometrika, 1927, pp. 293-309

[18] Coon, C.S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished manuscript.

[19] Reisner: Pyramides at Meroe. Sudan Notes and Records, 5, 1922, pp. 133-196.

Prehistoric Ethiopia MP4
Ancient Ethiopia MP3

P 174 325 As Wainwright points out,[20] both Nubia and Ethiopia have supplies of iron ore lying on the surface suitable for reduction in bloomeries such as were used in ancient times, and timber for charcoal, but that knowledge of iron as a metal (not yet iron-smelting) was probably introduced into Ethiopia by Asian mercenaries in the 6th century B.C. In A 175 325 480 B.C. Herodotus reports the "Ethiopians" as still without iron weapons. The first iron smelting in this region occurred at Napata in the early 4th century B.C., and the full iron age, when iron became the normally used metal, only in 300 to 600 A.D., with iron ingots being transported. Thus it can be seen that the problem of "iron age" is not a simple one. In fact, iron weapons may have become available in limited quantities and localities, when Ptolemy II (283-245 B.C.) organized hunting expeditions for the capture of elephants.[21] It was his successor, Ptolemy III (245-222B.C.) who left a Greek inscription at the Ethiopian port of Adulis, recording that he captured elephants. These hunting establishments lasted until Ptolemy V (203-181 B.C.), and may have constituted the first center of nearby Aksum before it became the capital of a new kingdom. For it was the same Ptolemy III, called Euergetes, who left an inscribed block of stone at Aksum with magical hieroglyphs (against wild animals?) later known as "cippi" of Horus.

A 175 325 439 About 250 years after the shutting down of these Ptolemaic hunting establishments, the document by Periplus, the

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[21] Wainwright: Early Records. Man, July-Aug., 1942.pp.84-88.
[20] Wainwright : Iron in the Napatan and Meroitic Ages. Sudan Notes and Records, 1942, Vol. 25, pp. 5-36.

Ancient Ethiopia MP3
Ethiopia MP1

A famed Greek-speaking merchant of about 60 A.D. at the port
175 of Adulis (near the modern Massaua), records the importation
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439 of iron ore and the production of spears used against ele-
phants and other wild beasts; also the importation of ready-
made iron axes, adzes and swords, some from India. Aeizana,
King of Aksum, vanquished the Nubians in 350 A.D. and car-
ried off the iron and bronze of Meroe island. In 522 A.D.,
Cosmas reports iron imported into Ethiopia, loaded on oxen
that also carried salt, and taken to the Agau (Cushitic-
speaking) country in western Ethiopia, where it was sold to
A the natives for gold. This was carried out in silent, "dumb
175 trade" transactions in which the participants withdrew from
437 the scene after leaving the amount they wanted to sell; the
other trading party then would place what they considered
the equivalent.

E As late as the 18th century A.D. iron was still impor-
175 ted by the Agau and sold to the more primitive Shanqalla
325 people of Fazoqli, in southwest Ethiopia, in exchange for
439 gold pellets, as reported by Bruce.[22] Iron was brought
from as far as Kordofan, via Senaar in the Sudan, and even
in the 19th century was so rare at Fazoqli that it was used
for making ornaments, while hoes for digging remained of
wood. They did not smelt it, merely smithed it, and this
way of working iron is still the predominant pattern among
even the comparatively more sophisticated Amhara today.

An
173 Consideration of the "prehistoric" period of Ethiopian
history may also take into account the Abyssinian tradition

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[22] Bruce: Travels between the Years 1733 and 1765. Vol. 2, p. 432; Vol. 3, p. 737.

173 referring to the foundation of the "Solomonic Dynasty" of Abyssinia, in accordance with which the present Emperor and his predecessors carry the title "Lion of Judah". The details are set down in the Ethiopic (Geez) book "Kebra Negast" (Honor of the Kings), the national epic of present Ethiopia. Accorto it, the first emperor of this dynasty was Menelik I, who ruled about 975-950 B.C., and who was the son of Makeda (Bilqis in Arabic lore), the ruling Ethiopian "Queen of Sheba", and of King Solomon; conceived during the visit she paid him (which visit is in the Bible but without mention of any offspring). The book further relates that young Menelik I, grown to manhood, went to Jerusalem to see his father for the first time, was received with joy, and was educated there. Then he returned to rule his Ethiopia, accompanied by a thousand first-born of each of the twelve tribes. One of the young men was the son of Zadok, the high priest, who stole the treasured Ark of the Covenant from the Holy of Holies in the temple, and brought it to Aksum (all Abyssinian Coptic churches have a sacred tablet in their Holy of Holies). After Menelik I, according to official tradition, 159 sovereigns of this "Solomonic line" ruled until, in 927 A.D., the line was interrupted by 11 sovereigns of the Zagwe line, for a period of 333 years. In 1260 it was restored and the present Emperor Haile Selassie I is the 66th sovereign since the restoration.

174 This tradition links the Abyssinian culture of Ethiopia to Semitic origins. It is known that the area that later became Aksum was settled by Semitic-speaking peoples from Saba and Hadhramaut prior to 500 B.C.

174 [177] When these colonizers arrived they found a Cushitic-speaking people already settled. Cushitic is one of the three families of Hamitic (the others being Berber and Egyptian) to which Professor Greenberg adds a fourth, the Chad-Ham. These Cushites were non-Negroid farmers; some nomadic cattle-breeders; mountaineers; or hunting tribes.

174 177 There is valid historical evidence for the colonization. Besides linguistic evidence, there are inscriptions at Adulis (the present Zula near Annesley Bay), and at Aksum. The newcomers, often called Himyarites because of the section of Southern Arabia from which most, though not all, of them had come, brought a comparatively complex civilization. Four kingdoms (Saba, Ma'in, Qataban, Ausan) had flourished in Southern Arabia as far back as 1300 B.C. Perhaps compelled by warfare at home and attracted by new land in Ethiopia, they began to drift across the Red Sea, through the Eritrean gateway and started colonizing the northern highlands. They made gardens out of the bush through irrigation techniques, and grew wealthy by trade with East India.[23] It was probably they who later imported the camel, for overland trade across deserts. When the Sabeans conquered the three neighboring kingdoms, the Hadhramauti immigrants settled in Ethiopia permanently. They built stone houses, dams, huge stone cisterns (one constitutes the only available reservoir at Aksum today!), and introduced the written Geez alphabet still, with some modifications, in use today

[23] Coon: Horn of Africa. Unpublished manuscript.

Ancient Ethiopia Hist

174 177 (This was a modification of "musned", the Himyarite alphabet).

B. The Aksum Kingdom: Cultures in contact; a millenium of isolation.

The culture patterns that shared predominantly in the creation of Aksum were threefold: the Himyarite, the Egyptian and the Greek, in that order of importance. There was also the Cushitic substratum, and a somewhat later influence from Jews and Syrians.

From South-Semitic Himyar came such culture traits as the alphabet and writing, artificial irrigation with considerable complexity, water dams, the spice trade, temples to the moon god Ares with the motif of crescent and disc, stone houses, the scratch plow and, later, the camel for long-distance transportation across lowlands.

From Egypt, probably via the Egyptian hunting and trading stations, came the knowledge of trade routes into the Sudan and interior of Africa, iron weapons, inland water transportation, the "Horus lock" - a coxcomb on the otherwise shaven head of boys (still worn by the Amhara today). Egyptian, Aksumite, and Amhare women of today all follow the method of grinding millet with a backward and forward, rather than circular motion. With Egypt, Aksum carried on trade in incense, gold, ivory, ebony, leopard skins and slaves. Later, the Funj kingdom of Senaar, in the Sudan, continued this trading contact.

From the Greek-speaking world, mainly via Alexandria, Aksum was affected by both trade and linguistic influences. Periplus of Alexandria has already been mentioned. Greek became the court language at Aksum. Greek and Roman ships

Ancient Ethopia MP3

174/177 arrived at the port of Adulis (Zula). There, an inscription from the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes (247-233 B.C.) in Greek has been found. A later inscription, from the first century A.D. is that of an Aksumite king who describes his conquests and gives thanks to his "mighty god Ares, who begat me" and also offers thanks and sacrifices to Zeus and Poseidon.[24] These discoveries were made by the Greek mapmaker from Alexandria, Cosmas Indicopleustes, in 550 A.D.[25]

It seems clear that the Greek influence was the thinnest of all, affecting only the thin upper stratum of the ruling class, through the Greek literature which only they could read, and possibly through the "wholesale trade". For when Aksum was converted to Christianity, the New Testament had to be translated from Greek into Geez as late as the end of the 5th century A.D. The people still spoke Geez, and in the centuries of isolation that followed the Islamic conquest, the stone memorials of Aksum and the culture associated with them fell into disuse and became a source of wonderment to the later generations there, much like Mayan ruins to the modern descendants of their builders. There was much "culture loss".

174 By 200 B. C. the Kingdom of Aksum, on the northeast highland, seems solidly organized. In 270 A.D. the Aksumites invaded their mother country in Arabia Felix for the first time, and continued doing so from time to time until shortly before the rise of Islam.

Probably through the Greek-speaking contacts, a Mosaic, non-Rabbinic form of Judaism, similar to that practiced by

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24. Blackman: The Fellahin of Upper Egypt. 1928, p.444.
25. Dillmann; Zur Geschichte des Axumitischen Reiches im 4. bis 6. 1880, p. 8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara

Ancient Ethiopia MP3

174 a section of Egyptian Jewry long before the destruction of the second Temple of Jerusalem, reached sophisticated Aksum. Converts were made also, perhaps later, as far west as the Agau, a Cushitic-speaking people west of Lake tana, from whom the present Falasha are probably descended. Since Falasha means "exile", it is possible that Aksumites who refused to accept Christianity when it came to Aksum, were exiled to the Agau country, then beyond the borders of Aksum.

174 177 There are many questions and little valid history of this influence. But some Jewish patterns are retained in the Christianity of Abyssinians today. Pork is considered forbidden, and not raised; circumcision of boys takes place usually a week after birth; priests on a higher level consider Saturday a day of rest (non-labor) second only to Sunday; churches are still built on the basic pattern of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem; the official position of the "Solomonic Dynasty" maintains that the first Emperor of Ethiopia and other pre-Christian rulers were of the Jewish religion.

Greek-speaking Syrians converted Aksum to Christianity in the 4th century A.D. According to the romanticised Abyssinian account, a Syrian trader named Meropius was shipwrecked, His nephews, Frumentius and Aedesius, survived and, escaping slaughter at the hands of the coastal people, made their way to Aksum where they became courtiers. Frumentius taught the king's son. Since the brothers were Christians, they spread this influence, especially after the king's death, and, in 326 A.D., Frumentius was consecrated Bishop of "India" (since Europeans still believed India and South

Ancient Ethiopia MP3
Medieval Ethiopia MP2

A 174 177 Africa to be part of one continent) by Archbishop Athanasius of Alexandria. This was the beginning of the ecclesiastic rule of Alexandria over Abyssinia, which ended only after world War II.

Frumentius was given the Abyssinian titles "Abba Salama" (Father of Peace) and "Abuna" (archbishop), titles which continue today.

At the Council of Ephesus, the Alexandrian clergy took the view that Christ's nature was one, rather than two as maintained by the developing Nicene creed of Rome. As a result, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., the "Monophysites" of Alexandria, including the Abyssinians, broke away from the European church (though probably organizational and national jealousies were also involved) and were henceforth often referred to as "Copts".[26]

M 173 The tie between Alexandria and Aksum was continued even after Islam conquered Alexandria in 644 A.D. The spread of Islam cut off European contacts from the 7th to the 16th century and thus atrophied the Mediterranean influence in Aksum. The first contacts with Islam had not been unfriendly. During Mohammed's lifetime, his persecuted followers found refuge in Aksum, and its ruler, according to Muslim tradition, was the only king who replied to Mohammed's announcement of his mission (although in the negative). Later relations grew more hostile.

A M 174 Meanwhile Coptic Christianity was spreading from Aksum. Part of this process can be traced by means of historical records. There are two stone inscriptions at Aksum

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[26] Leipoldt: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Altchristlichen Literatur, n.s., V.10, pp. 1-213, 1934.

Ancient Ethiopia MP3
Medieval Ethiopia MP2

A M 174 dated circa 450 A.D.[27] Both deal with King Ezana (or Tazana), the first royal convert. In the first inscription he dedicates his throne to Astar (heaven), Baher (sea) and Medr (earth), and gives thanks to Mahrem (or Ares), the War God. In the second, the king worships the Christian God, Egziabeher.

A [747] About 550 A.D. Syrian missionaries arrived, the "Nine saints from Rum" (actually Byzantium) in Abyssinian tradition, who displayed great energy. They, perhaps, brought the beginning of Byzantine-type church painting found to this day even in remote, wattle-and-mud churches.

About this time another war effort was made by the Aksumites against Dhu Nuwas, King of Saba, where, according to Abyssinian tradition, "fellow-Christians" were being persecuted.

M 538 From the 7th century, when European contact atrophied for a 1000 years, there was much literary activity in Aksum. The Octateuch, consisting of the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, were translated from Greek to Geez. Also popular were the Apocrypha, including the Book of Jubilees, Enoch, Ascension of Isaiah, Baruch, the 3rd and 4th Books of Ezra. Later, translations from the Arabic were added, e.g. the Books of Adam and Eve.[28] Later, translations of romances of Alexander, and "Miracles of Mary" ("tamra maryam") were translated from the Arabic of Alexandria into Geez.

M [198] Thus Geez, which had been the vulgate during the Greek period, was elevated to a holy language associated with the Coptic religion.

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27. Black: Op. cit., p. 445.
28. Littmann: Geschichte der Christlichen Literaturen des Ostens, VII, 2. 1907, p. 227.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Medieval Ethiopia MP2

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439 Arab merchants took over the Red Sea trade and the supply of luxuries to the court of Aksum: swords, damask cloth, perfumes, marroquin leather. (All oriental imports are termed "arab", to this day.)

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648 In the 9th and 10th centuries, the power of Aksum began to wane. According to the sparse Abyssinian Royal Chronicles, there were wars with Nubia, and with the Falashas, who were growing in power. There is a letter addressed by Aksum to the King of Nubia, asking for help against a Falasha queen Judith, who was credited with having helped to establish a rival dynasty, the Zagwē[29] in 928 A.D., in Lasta, south of Aksum. Warfare is said to have begun about 950 B.C. and to have lasted 40 years. What remained of the "Solomonic Dynasty" had to abandon Aksum and take refuge southward, in the Länz district of Shoa, which then became the residence of the aristocracy of Shoa (still the aristocratic residence of the Amhara, though now much blended with Galla).

175 On the other hand, in its attempt to win the loyalty of the Aksumite and other Abyssinian peoples, the Zagwe Dynasty had to abandon its Falasha coalition and compromise with the powerful Coptic church. The Zagwe king Lalibela built the famous monolithic churches at Lasta, which are still unique.

It was not until 1260 A.D. that the "Solomonic Dynasty" was restored, through a coalition with the church, which negotiated the peaceful abdication of the Zagwe dynasty and received one-third of the fertile territory, in feudal fief as reward. The "Solomonic Dynasty" remained in Shoa, to

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[29] Black: Op. cit., p. 445.

175 rule from there, while the town of Aksum was included in the church territory and is ruled by a monk.

C. The Kingdom of Shoa; emergence of the Amhara.

With the establishment of the Solomonic Dynasty in Shoa, the King Yekuno Amlak gave himself the title "Negusa Nägast za-Ityopya", King of Kings of Ethiopia. He extended his realm over neighboring, non-Christian provinces in all directions, including some Muslim areas in Cushitic-speaking lands to the south and east, and Falasha territory to the west.

Now that Geez had become the holy language of the church, and was understood only by the literate few, he recognized, as the official language, the vulgate Amharic, a blend of Semitic and Cushitic, which had gradually arisen.

Thus the King handed the Aksumite, Himyarite, Greek and Egyptian past over to the realm of the church, while expanding his Amhara culture deeper into the more African parts of Ethiopia. Contact with the Mediterranean was maintained by the church, through Alexandria and through the small group of Abyssinian monks in Jerusalem. In this way the Western world continued to hear intermittent rumors of a "Prester John", the Christian king on the other side of the Muslim world.

The Abyssinian church flourished. The Abuna who had negotiated the accession took the appellation Täklä Haymanot (lit. Plant of Faith), and he is now regarded as the foremost national saint by his church. With the vast number of serfs on the feudal church territories newly at his disposal, 175 he built churches and monasteries, the latter on strategic mountain peaks or easily defensible locations, including the still existing monastery of Debra Libanos, in Shoa. A renaissance of church literature began which lasted almost 200 years: the "Kebrä Negäst" (Magnificance of the Kings) was compiled to prove descent of the Shoan kings from the Solomonic line, and inheritance of ecclesiastic rights of the Abyssinian clergy from the son of the High Priest Zadok.[30] While part of the Queen of Sheba tradition was probably taken from an earlier Arabic elaboration of the Biblical story, this period also saw numerous original writings in Geez, mostly romances on historical, military, and religious themes such as hagiology.

This renaissance ended as civil wars broke out between the Amhara and the people of Tigre, who, as Coptic Christians speaking a language that had remained closer to Geez, and living in and near Aksum, considered themselves the rightful heirs of Aksum and were jealous of the new dominance of the Amhara.[31] This rivalry, starting at about the reign of the powerful, expansionist Shoan King Amda Sion I (1314-1344) continued in the form of Tigre separatist movements and rebellions until the return of Haile Selassie in 1941.

An even greater danger was building up from the Muslim world, until, in 1430, the ring around Abyssinia was complete with the Muslim conquest of Somaliland. Allied with superficially islamized and pagan semi-nomadic Galla tribes, the Muslims invaded from the south, through the Rift Valley, burning churches and monasteries. King Zar'a Ya'qob (1444 -

[30] Littman, op. cit., pp. 227-246
[31] Ibid, p. 197

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1468) slowly retreated before the onslaught, and, deeply religious, ordered manuscripts and church paintings hidden at the other end of his realm, on islands of Lake Tana (e.g. on the island Daga Estefanos) where some survive today, jealously guarded by monks. In 1427, Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal had sent Pedro da Covilham to seek out "Prester John", his Christian brother-king, and to find there, as he hoped, new sources of cinnamon and other spices. Don Pedro, though treated hospitably, was not permitted to leave. He was an old man when seen again by a second delegation of his countrymen, who arrived during the more modest reign of King Eskender (1478 - 1494), while another Galla invasion from the south was in progress. The old man had become interested in Abyssinian painting, and was too old to return home.

Turkish firearms (turk baaha) in a quantity of several hundred, supplied by the Muslims to the Galla invaders during the reign of the Shoan King Lebna Dengel (1508-1540), caused the invasion to be renewed with greater fury than ever. In his desperation, the king remembered the Portuguese visitors and their firearms, and sent a young Armenian named Matthew through the Muslim encirclement to solicit aid.[32] A Portuguese embassy arrived in 1520, led by Father Alvarez, who, after his return to Portugal in 1527, wrote down his observations of the culture of Shoa and Aksum, and the tent-city capital of the king and nobles. Almost at the same time, in 1528, the leader of the Islamized Galla, Mohammed Grañ (the "left-handed), who had become Emir Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, attacked with Arabs from Yemen, Somalis, and Dankalis. He overran nearly all

[32] Yilma: Haile Selassie. 1936, p. 83.

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175 defenses, proceeded as far north as Aksum, which he razed, and killed King Lebna Dengel in battle in 1540, after he had retreated to the district of Amara Saint in Shoa (almost as aristocratic an area as Mänz). Shoa was completely overrun by Galla, who settled there, learned agriculture, and today make up most of the population of Shoa. Churches and monasteries of Shoa were sacked and razed, The children of the king and the clergy took refuge on and north of Lake Tana (the later Gondar area).

From there, the slain king's son Galaudeos (Claudius) fought on, and a year later, in 1541, the Portuguese aid arrived. Dom Christofo Da Gama landed at Massaua with 450 musketeers. Although he died fighting, the tide was turned; and in 1543, Grañ was defeated and fell in battle.

Since Shoa had been destroyed, the king's tent city remained at Gondar. The Portuguese built bridges in the area, which are still in use. They built castles on the north shore of Lake Tana, and Jesuits began the attempt to convert the king and the people to Roman Christianity. The king and the Abyssinian clergy debated with them, but they were tolerated since the Portuguese enjoyed great prestige as saviors of the country. They learned and used the Amharic language.

The soul-searching of this period produced a revival of Amharic literature, as religious apologias in defense of the Monophysite faith, and in opposition to the Catholic church calendar. Both religious groups published prayers in the Amharic language. The period also produced a native literary figure, Zara Yeqob (no relation to the earlier

175 king), the son of a simple peasant, born near Aksum.[33] In true eastern tradition, he retired to a cave to think. When he emerged he had worked out a Theism on a rationalistic basis. The Abyssinian clergy of his time dismissed his writings as "babble", and he earned his living as tutor to the son of a nobleman. This pupil later collaborated on his philosophic work "Hatata". He also wrote secular prose and some poetry, occasionally in a satirical vein.[34]

Father Paes, the first Jesuit leader to attempt to convert the king, had not been able to make much headway in the endless religious debates, and had devoted much time to writing his observations. His successor, less diplomatic and more zealous, was Alfonso Mendes. He realized that the Amhara people could not be converted unless the king and the top hierarchy had been converted, much as Frumentius had done. King Za Dengel was the first royal convert, but when the king encouraged his subjects at the court to follow suit, the Coptic clergy organized a quiet rebellion, and the king was removed, possibly assassinated. His successor, King Susneos (also called Malak Sagad) (1607-1632) was privately converted in 1626, but he was more careful and did not urge conversion on his subjects. Alfonso Mendes, who acted as the King's Confessor, criticized him severly for it, until Susneos acquiesced. Then began a series of rebellions, religious wars against his own subjects. During these internal wars, the Falashas were defeated in battle, and their remnants, having lost independence forever, retreated to the mountains.[35] The Coptic clergy excommunicated the king and encouraged rebellions. It is said that he repented shortly before his death, for he did revoke his earlier proclamations, and declared religious liberty for all his subjects. Broken in spirit, he died in 1632.

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[33] Littman: op. cit., pp. 219-224.
[34] Bent: The Sacred City of the Ethiopians. 1839, pp. 449.

D. The Amhara Center in Gondar

A new era began that year, for Abyssinia, the Abyssinian church, the Amhara, and for Gondar. The new King Fasilidas (1632 - 1667) expelled all Portuguese, re-established the privileges of the clergy, and cut the country off from further European influence. The Amhara culture pattern turned inward. The term for European, "ferenj" (i.e. Frank) became a term of opprobium, synonymous with christian infidel.

The Gondar branch of the Solomonic (Ag'azian) Dynasty was now established. The seat of the government remained in Gondar until the reign of Takla Giyorgis in the 18th century. The workmen trained by the Portuguese were utilized by King Fasilidas, his son Tsadequ Yohannes, grandson Yadem Segadiyasu and their Prime Ministers to build large stone castles for them, north of the Portuguese area, a day's journey north of Lake Tana, on higher ground (just above the malaria belt). Here the town of Gondar was built, on a flat hilltop, a town of wattle-and-mud huts surrounding the towering royal castles ("gemb"). and palaces (gebbi). Special walled paths shielded the royal

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[35] Littman, op. cit., p. 221; Leslau: A Falasha Religious Dispute. Am.Acad.Jewish Research,16,pp.71-95; quoting Solomon of Vienna who visited in the area in 1626; 1947.

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175 family from common sight. The King judged cases brought before him as he sat under a huge, broad fig tree. A stone-lined waterpool was constructed under the King's balcony, and a mausoleum entombing his favorite horse. All this remained; but after three generations the skills of stonemesonry were gradually lost.

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177 This "culture loss" was the fate also of other arts which the Portuguese had introduced. When Gondar was later abandoned, the kings returned to their military tent-cities, and titles such as "commander of the right flank" are still given to sons of nobility. One of the highest is "Dejazmach" (lit. "commander of the entrance to the ruler's tent"). Viticulture was another art introduced by the Portuguese, and the vines grew well on the "woyna dega", the middle elevation. But it too was gradually lost in the 18th century, and today raisins are imported by the clergy to produce sacramental wine. The Portuguese are also believed to have introduced the orange, which shared the same fate. At least one 262 of the spices still used in the Abyssinian pepperred meat stew (wot) may have been introduced by the Portuguese from Central America, capsicum Americani KN.

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354 Gondar continues as a place of high prestige among the Amhara. Even noble families from Manz and Amhara Saint in Shoa try to trace their ancestry to the royal branch of Gondar.

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175 The Gondar kings did not try to regain the territory lost to the Galla, but they did fight occasional Galla uprisings, and rebellious usurpers. Also, rival kingdoms within Coptic Abyssinia were often at war with each other, and in rebellion against the Gondar King of Kings.

175 Gondar had been abandoned by the Solomonic line, when, in 1855, the chieftain Kassa, son of a poor commoner widow (so poor that she had to gather Kosso bark in the dega for a living) had himself crowned King Theodore at Gondar. He avoided Adsum, the usual place of coronation, since he did not wish to emphasize the power of the clergy. They were still sympathetic to the Solomonic line now limited to Shoa. Theodore brought Gondar and Gojjam under his rule, but Tigre resisted. While on this campaign, Gondar rebelled, the Amhara nobles of that city considering Theodore an upstart. In revenge, he called it a city of thieving traders, and sacked it. To strengthen his claim to the throne, he married the daughter of Ras Ali, a Galla ruler, hoping to bring the Galla under his rule. He defeated the king of Shoa, and took the dynastic heir, the boy Menelik II, hostage.

Theodore was more farsighted, and, for a long time, more statesmanlike than the usual provincial warlord. He realized the urgency of uniting all the ethnic groupings of his country into a nation, to keep Ethiopia from losing her independence at the hands of European colonial powers. To learn news of the outside world, he at first welcomed visitors from abroad, British and Swiss Protestant missionaries whom he permitted to convert the non-Coptic sections of the population, German technicians, etc. He made plans to modernize Ethiopia. He was interested in the American Civil War and the weapons used, since he had to fight civil wars almost incessantly. He became very attached to his British advisor, Bell, who accompanied him in battle. Mr. Bell had married a native princess and held the rank of

175 of "liqamakwas" (marshall).

Theodore's plans for modernization were far ahead of his time for his country; his proclamations were therefore unpopular. He tried to turn the feudal chiefs into salaried officials; abolish the slave trade; abolish private feudal armies; replace the soldier's reward of fiefs (gult) with a centralized army budget; limit tolls on traffic; enforce Christian monogamy and declare "damoz" (a type of concubinage) illegal; suppress blood feuds between clans; regulate and limit the temporal power of the church, particularly over land fiefs. (Most of this was achieved only 80 to 90 years later).

Theodore's courtiers bowed to him but his chiefs balked him quietly. He had not been trained in the patient diplomacy of the Amhara noble. His reactions were spontaneous, direct, and, especially later, violent and cruel. After his friend Bell had fallen in battle, Theodore ceased to exercise any restraint. In 1866 he jailed and chained British missionaries who had displeased him. As a result, two years later Lord Napier's fleet landed a British-Indian army, and was greeted as liberator by the population of Tigre province. Instead of massacring the train of elephants carrying cannons through mountain passes, the Tigreans acted as guides and allies. Soon the fort of Magdalla, which Theodore had armed with Turkish cannon, fell, and he committed suicide (a very rare practice among Amhara). Lord Napier thereupon quickly withdrew his forces from the country.

One of the immediate results of these events was that the Tigre Copts won a temporary ascendency in their old

15 rivalry against the Amhara, and a Tigrē chief, of extremely conservative, Coptic leanings, was crowned King Yohannes, or John IV. He honored Aksum by having himself crowned there, bringing to an end the hegemony of Gondar. He established his capital within Tigrē province, at Mäqäle (Makalle). He urged and sometimes forced islamized Galla chiefs of neighboring Wollo province to accept Coptic Christianity. He had no interest in world affairs, and when the British needed his help to evacuate British garrisons in Eritrea threatened by the Mahdi, they had to promise him part of Eritrea as an adjunct to his Tigrē province. In 1889 the Mahdi ("därbush", i.e. dervishes in Amharic) attacked Abyssinia from the northwest and razed Gondar, much more thoroughly than Theodore had done. The people of Gondar never rebuilt their stone houses, and the city, with the exception of the castle, is today a town of shacks made of wood, hardened clay, and corrugated iron. King John IV fell in battle just outside Gondar town.

E. Amhara rule from Addis Ababa

The Shoan heir to the "Solomonic Dynasty" had grown to manhood while the hostage of Theodore, and had managed to escape home to Shoa. Menelik II was as interested in world affairs as Theodore had been, and knew that Abyssinia could not isolate itself any longer without grave danger in an Africa that was being carved up by European colonial powers. But he had the personality of the typical Amhara noble, and proceeded diplomatically, patiently and persistently.

He equipped his forces with firearms, many obtained

175 from the Italians. Under his rule, many Galla chiefs learned to speak Amharic well enough to be more easily controlled by him. For while he wanted the Amhara to dominate, he realized the importance of welding all Ethiopia into a nation, in which the Galla would play an important role. Moreover, as an Amhara from Shoa, he was much better acquainted with and less contemptuous of his Galla neighbors and subjects than the distainful Amhara of Gondar.

It is typical of Menelik's pattern of procedure that he never rebelled against King John IV during his reign, but rather negotiated an agreement with him, according to which King John IV and the Tigreans would recognize Menelik as successor to the throne in return for loyalty during King John's lifetime.

Thus, Menelik II became Emperor of Abyssinia in 1889, and began to expand his realm until it included the territoy of present Ethiopia. He did this sometimes by treaty, sometimes by treaty, sometimes by moving his troops in a particular direction and obtaining vassalage of nearby chiefs, sometimes by actual warfare. If there was any doubt in the mind of any Coptic "Ras" (lit. "head"; actually, in his time, semi-independent feudal chief of a province and heir to provincial dynasty, with own army)[36], or Galla chief about the dominance of Menelik II, it was dispelled after his amazing victory over the invading Italians in 1896, at Aduwa.

After this, it seemed improper for the Emperor to remain in his tent-city capital at Ankober in Shoa, located on the cold "dega". Empress Taitu, who had ridden into battle along her husband, was a heavy woman (in the pre-

[36] roughly equivalent to the medieval European "Duke".

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175 ferred style of Amhara noblewomen) and liked the hot mineral springs on the "woyna dega". Menelik had agreed to build his capital there, although it was a Gall-speaking district of southern Shoa. He named his capital Addis Ababa, the "new flower", which term henceforth became symbolic for the new Ethiopia, and for the rule by the family of Menelik II.

Expansion of this rule brought diverse territories, tribes, linguistic and racial groups, into the political boundaries of Ethiopia: the hardworking, Semitic-speaking, people of Guragē, and their fertile country; the slave-trading islamized Galla rulers of independent Kaffa and Jimma; the disunited Galla kingdoms of semi-nomadic as well as agricultural Arussi, Limmu, Gera, islamized Harar, etc.; Nilotic and negroid border peoples like the Shanqálla and Guma; Somali-speaking tribes of Ogaden, and Wollamo and Sidamo peoples in the far south.

Some territories whose rulers had submitted without a fight were granted local autonomy: the Wollamo kings until 1903, and Jinna even longer. In all other lands, the usual fate of Amhara conquest was meeted out: The "rope was thrown",[37] the land divided into "gasha" units varying in size according to estimated fertility, and most of the land was allocated to officers and soldiers in lieu of payment for services. The former inhabitants could remain as tenants. But the Galla chiefs and some others were permitted to retain from 1/4 to 1/3 of their former lands as their own fiefs and rule them as "balbat" 'landlords); some were given additional lands further south in reward for military services. Thus the southern Amhara and northern Galla moved closer to each

[37] This is the traditional method of measuring land.

175 other in patterns of living.

The Coptic church was also given land in all conquered territories, partley to reward the military chaplains, partly to sustain the churches built in "pagan" and "islamized" areas.

175 648 Foreign consuls and ambassadors began to stream into Addis Ababa in the years that followed the victory at Aduwa. Italians and Czarist Russians built hospitals in Addis Ababa, and the French in Harar. Missionaries from Europe, of all denominations, were permitted to work in "non-Copts". The empress had a hotel built in Addis Ababa (primarily for foreign visitors) , managed by Greeks and Armenians.

175 177 Expanding Addis Ababa threatened to exhaust local fuel and water supplies. Menelik ordered the importation of the fast-growing eucalyptus tree and by proclamation encouraged its planting by all his subjects. When they realized that the tree grew faster than any native tree during each rainy season, they planted it even in remote areas where royal commands were sometimes ignored.

175 177 439 Cotton was imported in large quantities, for even the commoner in Addis Ababa wanted to wear the white jodphurs and long white shirt with the narrow sleeved ("edj tebab") of the Amhara noble, under the universal toga ("shamma"). When this fashion spread to the countryside, especially during Haile Selassie's reign, the "educated" citizen of Addis Ababa began to wear a military-type loose khaki jacket under a lighter and finer shamma.

175 [439] Iron scrap was imported from Eritrea in larger quantities and gradually became cheaper even in the rural areas.

175 [554] Ownership of the sun umbrella, once the privilege of the king ("jan - ṭela)", became the ambition of every Addis Ababa housewife. Little china coffee cups ("fenjäl") followed along the expanded trade routes replacing the unglazed clay cups. Menelik's victories were taken personally and even the Amhara serf felt a little nobler. All of Abyssinia was now literally "swearing by" by the Emperor, saying "Menelik yemut" ("may the emperor die, if I lie") on oral private contracts, marriage agreements, etc. [175]

Emperor Menelik II sickened and died in 1913, leaving as his successor his daughter's son Lij (Prince) Yassu, then a young man of 17, The prince was fond of drink and disinterested in government. But it was his favoring of the Muslim Galla nobility, to whom he was related on his father's side which led to his being deposed in 1916. The Coptic church took the initiative and found allies among rebellious nobles of the old school; among some persons interested in continued modernization; and British agents who did not like the increasing influence of Turkish, Muslim agents who were their rivals (World War I was raging in Europe).

Another daughter of Menelik, Empress Zauditu, occupied the throne, while the actual administration was given over to a regent -- a second cousin of Menelik, the young Ras (Lord) Tafari Makonnen (now known as Emperor Haile Selassie). The new heir to the throne had received a modern French education in his paternal fief of conquered Harar, and was the leader of the modernizers in Addis Ababa, though not yet 20 years old at the time.

It clearly had been a political compromise, for the established Rases at first retained their power, and for a

175 long time continued to show their faith in the continuation of the old patterns by such actions as eschewing the automobile, riding their mules through Addis Ababa with huge military escorts of their own retinues, and expecting their provincial subjects to "swear by" them, rather than by Tafari Makonnen (Haile Selassie). The actions of the new regent in freeing of slaves, lightening the exploitation of the "gabbar" (serf) and education on his own fiefs did not impress the feudal lords as worthy of imitation. As far as the Coptic church was concerned, the regent was careful to be seen often at prayer and he also ordered the building of a new stone church in semi-European style in Addis Ababa.

Amond feudal rebellions the most serious were those of Ras Hailu, the Amhara lord of Gojjam, who even freed Lij Yassu from imprisonment; Ras Seyum of Tigre (descendent of King John IV), and, as late as 1929, no less a power than the husband of Empress Zauditu, Ras Gugsa Wallie, who had aroused the Azebu Galla tribe as an ally. All these Tafari Makonnen vanquished, sometimes in battle, but more often with calm diplomacy, even when he lacked sufficient military power.

Upon the death of Empress Zauditu, the regent was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia on November 2, 1930, now a major annual holiday. He had joined the League of Nations in 1923, had outlawed the slave trade, and had invited a Belgian military mission to train his army. One of his first acts as Emperor was to grant his subjects a written Constitution (further liberalized in 1955), changing the the traditional absolute rule to a constitutional monarchy, at least

175 in theoretical structure.[38]

The Emperor had also strengthened his internal position by allying himself, through his second marriage, with the ex-Muslim Galla king of Wollo province, King Mikael, whom John IV had forcibly converted to Coptic Christianity and who had since become a zealous Cop. This is the present Empress Menen, mother of the heir-presumptive.

The Italian occupation, 1935/6 to 1941, was too brief to make lasting changes, but it acted as a catalyst, hastening the changes that Haile Selassie had begun. These, particularly education, modernization, centralization of power, Amharization and Ethiopian nationalism, he resumed with greater determination and power than ever before, upon his return in 1941. Now everyone "swears by" him, even in remote areas. Improvements in communication, by means of the Italian-built roads, telegraph, telephone, even the Ethiopian Airlines, have vastly increased, and provincial officials can no longer procrastinate as easily as before against unpopular or "strange" orders from the capital.

The Amhara culture pattern is gradually assuming, through imitation of Amhara culture traits and subtle attitudes, an ever greater significance for Ethiopia at large.

161 4. The Peoples of Ethiopia

162 A. The Demographic pattern; density; rural-urban distribution; migration.

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[38] For details see Messing, S.D.: "Changing Ethiopia", (in) The Middle East Journal, Autumn 1955.

161 There has never been a complete Ethiopian population
162 census. An Official United Nations estimate cites 15,000,000 population prior to the federation with Eritrea, which added another million.[39] This estimate is probably arrived at by averaging the usual estimates which run from 9 million to 20 million.

Most estimates of the ethnic distribution of the major groups in Ethiopia are based on the figures of Montandon in 1923; he established the nine million estimate for the total.[40] He estimated the major identities as follows:

Abyssinians (Amhara, and less numerous Tigre	3 million
Galla (recent "Hamitic")	3 million
Cushites ("old-Hamitic", e.g. Agau)	1 million
Somali and Danakil (coastal Hamitic)	1 million
Shanqalla (incl. Nilotic and negroid lowlanders)	1 million
total Ethiopia	9 million

161 It is clear that this estimate, which is considered the best even though conservative in the quantities, constitutes a medley of linguistic, tribal, territorial and racial configurations. But in actual practice, in Ethiopia, it is almost impossible to do much better prior to a reliable modern census. For identities are so complex and overlapping in the actual life of the peoples concerned, that to unscramble and reassemble them for the purpose of scientific neatness would seem an arbitrary procedure.

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39. U.N. Statistical Yearbook. 1955.
40. Montandon, G.: L'Esclavage en Abyssinie, 1923, pp. 30.

161 In the following pages an attempt of this sort will be made, for purposes of orientation, but it must be considered tentative, until better data becomes available.

Estimates of the density of the population vary. A recent geographer estimated the average density of Ethiopia (without Eritrea) as 36 persons per square mile, based on a population of 15 million. But he admits that the "qolla" area is much less densely populated.[41] Personal observation by the present writer indicates that even fertile areas are not densely populated, probably due to centuries of warfare, resulting local food shortages, and continuing high infant mortality. It was particularly the fertile highlands that historically were most affected by endemic warfare.

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369 Ethiopia is essentially a rural country. Not over 200,000 of the population live under permanently urban conditions, and few towns have a permanent population in excess of 10,000.[42] At market time and certain seasons population figures usually double and even triple. Some urban figures include villages within a day's march (e.g. in case of Gondar town). Thus, the population of Addis Ababa ranges from 150,000 to 500,000; of the coffee city of Harar from 20,000 to 50,000. Figures for the other two main urban centers give high estimates: 30,000 for the railroad junction town of Dire Dawa, through which the only rail line passes (about halfway between the capital and the coast); and 22,000 for Gondar, old caravan town on the way from the highlands to the Sudan.[43]

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[41] Kuo, Ethiopia. Amer. Geogr. Society of New York, Focus, June 1955, pp. 1-2.
[42] Simmons, et. al, 1951, p. 64.
[43] The Statesman's Yearbook, 1955 (ed. Steinberg), pp. 956-962

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[632] Thus, in the traditional pattern of behavior a town was regarded merely as a market-place, and only in exceptional cases did historical events lead to the founding of permanent towns, such as Gondar, through foreign stimulation. Towns are regarded as the places where one will encounter foreigners and foreign products: Arabs and East Indians in provincial town, Armenians and Greeks in the capital; all following occupations of commerce, especially wholesale trade, of which they have monopolies. Each of these four groups numbers several thousand. [1162] They have been resident in Ethiopia for up to a century. In addition there are now several thousand Italians whose services as truckdrivers, auto mechanics, construction, water and electrical engineers are so urgently needed that they were permitted to remain after the Italian occupation ended.

The urban Arabs have the pattern of building their mosques and Quran schools just behind the major urban markets. It is there that their population is densest, in a kind of self-made ghetto. One never finds Muslim villages in predominantly Coptic areas, for no one would sell or rent them land in the past. Now lowland Muslims (Sudanese or ex-slaves) are beginning to imitate their Arab correligionists preferring urban residence. They have taken over much of the retail trade (e.g. in Gondar).

Urban Amhara are nearly always part-time farmers, with fields nearby.

167 Migration in the past was usually caused by the shifting of military and political power, in accordance with the historical events described earlier. New fiefs would be taken up by the victors and their "skilled" workmen. The

166 court of the king attracted ambitious young men, many of whom would settle in the vicinity. Presently, the major single
167 trend of migration is immigration of skilled Eritreans into the Coptic provinces of the Amhara, and Tigre-speaking areas where they are urgently needed as hospital "dressers" and pharmacists, teachers, specialized clerks, construction engineers, and in a wide gradation of other modern skills. They are not only attracted to Ethiopia because of the jobs open there, but are almost compelled to leave Eritrea because the sharp shrinking of the more modern economy there since 1952 has taken from many of them the means to a livelihood.

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369 Meanwhile, clerks and officials from the central government in Addis Ababa are fanning out to each of the 12 provincial capitals of Ethiopia, all of which are in the process of becoming urban centers, even though , especially in the south, they had only recently been mere market villages.

163 Very little is known about the vital statistics of Ethiopia. Registration of birth and death is not required by the government, and is therefore avoided, since it might bring the evil eye. Observation indicates that infant mortality is very high and is the major single factor limiting family size and population increase. One observer has suggested that the average life span does not exceed 45-50 years.[44] If one were to take into consideration the infant mortality, the figure would probably be even lower, although occasionally one finds a man, more rarely a woman, in the eighties.

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[44] Simmons et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951, pp.62 - 73.

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162 B. Distribution of the Population by region, language and religion; ethnic stratification.

The division of Ethiopia into twelve administrative provinces has led to the availability of official estimates of population by the present government, which needs such information to strengthen central control from Addis Ababa. The information must be fairly accurate, offering another approach to the study of distribution of population.[45]

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[45] Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, pp. 390-406.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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Table 1. Population Estimates of the 12 Ethiopian Provinces

Administrative Province	Area in Square Kilometers	Official estimate of population 1954	Ethnic Preponderance (author's comments)		Additional Remarks
			Language	Religion	
Begemder	78,200	1,800,000	Amharic	Coptic	some border Muslim and highland Falashas.
Gojjam	62,900	1,600,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Agau (old Cushitic)speakers
Shoa	78,700	2,100,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Gurage-speakers
Tigre	67,000	1,000,000	Galla, Tigrina.	Coptic	
Wollo	78,700	1,000,000	mostly Galla	Coptic	some Amharic
Wollega	67,200	1,000,000	Galla,Amharic	Coptic	some border Shanqalla(negroid, Nilotic-speaking)
Arussi	36,000	1,000,000	Galla	Muslim-"pagan"	
Hararge	404,000	1,600,000	Galla, some Somali	Muslim-"pagan"	some Somali semi-nomad tribes
Ilubabor	50,000	1,300,000	Galla, Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"	many border Shanqalla & other negroids
Kaffa	49,000	1,200,000	Galla,Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"-Muslim	many border negros
Gemu-Gofa	39,000	900,000	Sudanese,Galla	"pagan"	border negroids
Sidamo	102,000	1,250,000	old-Cushitic (Sidamo,Wollamo)	"pagan"	some nomadic border tribes
	1,110,000	15,750,000			
(Eritrea, federated 1952)	119,000	1,100,000	Bedja(Cushitic) Tigre(Semitic) Nilotic	Muslim Coptic	

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On the basis of these figures and interpretations, little over half the population of Ethiopia proper (not including Eritrea) is Coptic and can be regarded as "Abyssinians proper". Also, of the total population of Ethiopia, about 5 million, or 1/3, are native Amharic speakers, and constitute, especially in matters of governmental administration, a sort of upper class. However, there are several qualifications that should be added to these overall conclusions.

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Until the reign of the present emperor, and during much of it, the predominant and typical division of the population was into ethnic groups, and the resulting social hierarchy was largely based on what a particular group had experienced in the wars of Menelik II: whether they were among the victors, or among the vanquished. The upper class status of Amhara, was shared by landlords, chiefs, or poor tenants, once they reached conquered territories, and was rivalled only by the other Coptic Abyssinians from Tigriña-speaking Tigrē. In general, the Coptic religion itself constituted upper class membership in the hierarchy, and non-Coptic speakers of sister-languages of Amharic, such as the Guragē, did not share in this status and during that generation remained haulers of water and hewers of wood. The Galla were the largest of the subjected peoples. It mattered little to the Amhara whether the Galla were "pagan" or thinly islamized. The Coptic Priesthood did not try to "raise them to Christianity" (in the Amharic phrase).

Each of these ethnic entities had its own hierarchy of status and prestige. The Galla had originally been cattle breeders who had taken to horses, had invaded Abyssinia and had settled there in the 17th century A.D. Their famous "gada" age-grading determined much of social status of the individual during his life cycle. Today all Galla prefer the name "Oroma" for their ethnic identity -- the term formerly used for the aristocratic class which had originally done only cattle herding and had despised even skilled labor. The Tumtu class did blacksmithing, housebuilding and weaving; lived scattered; and were more mixed with negroid slaves physically. The next lower, 3rd class, was that of the tanners, who remained "pagans", were not even thinly islamized, and are regarded by some scholars as indigenous Africans, with their round conical-roof dwellings reminiscent of Negro Africa.[46] The lowest class was that of the hunters who dwelt in their own communities under their own chiefs, along streams and lakes.

The Somalis had a material and social organization somewhat similar to the early Gallas. Physically resembling the Masai, they lived as semi-nomads, but bred camels as well as cattle. They still roam the lowlands on the southeastern border of Ethiopia. In the border lowland below the eastern escarpment live the Danakil, a feared Hamitic-speaking desert people, probably of ancient residence, pushed to this ecologically marginal territory by later invaders. Related to them, linguistically, are peoples on the western border of Ethiopia, living right on the escarpment, the Agau-

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46. Coon: Measuring Ethiopia. 1935, p.10; and Coon: Horn of Africa.

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speaking people of Quara province who once extended at least as far into the country as Lake Tana. Below the western escarpment live Nilotic and Sudanese-speaking tribes. Perhaps the most negroid group among them are the Shangalla, on the west-southwest[47] who live in hot, moist lowlands. They once had their own African royal hierarchy. But they were preyed upon by Arab slave merchants in the past who stimulated slave raids by their neighbors. They were sold in slavery far and wide to Galla, to Amhara, etc., causing negroid strains in all Ethiopia due to the traditional concubinage. Since the present emperor has stamped out the slave trade in Ethiopia, this process is no longer repeated.

The Cushitic-speaking Wollamo (province of Sidamo) underwent a similar experience. They had their own kings until the time of Menelik II, in the very southern part of the highland. Some of this group were sold into slavery, about the turn of this century. They are dark, slender, non-negroid people with "pagan" worship in tree groves and phallic stone statuary.

Even under Menelik II some of this hierarchy began to change. As empire-builder, he rewarded, with lands and associated status, those subject peoples and chiefs who fought for him in his subsequent wars.

Out of this complex medley, the present ethnic stratification retains much of the old, Amharic-Coptic pattern, with a number of new sub-patterns, which, moreover, differ in emphasis from region to region. The following general ethnic hierarchy can be indicated, at least as it exists

[47] Coon: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p.73.

A in the minds of most Amhara:

E 1. The Coptic Abyssinian, on which top level the Am-
563 haric-speaker and the Tigrina-speaker are equal except for the added Amhara prestige due to the "Solomonic Dynasty". Both consider themselves "aṭṭenṭām" (of noble bones). Both consider themselves superior to all other groups, notably the "conquered nations", infidels,"laboring classes" and "lower races". Both consider themselves the descendants of the Hadhrami invaders of the late pre-Christian era.

As conquerors, the Amhara believe in their superior toughness. The aphorism says:

A [53] "The aged Amhara is (powerful) like bärbärē
the aged Galla is (soft) like butter".

A [101] The word Amhara is itself derived from "amari", meaning one who is pleasing, agreeable, beautiful and gracious.

On the other hand, the services rendered by Galla cavalry to Menelik II (e.g. in his victory over the Italians at Aduwa) are well known and admitted. In reward, many of the Galla feudal nobles were permitted to retain in fief 1/4 of their land and its serfs, so that a Galla "Balbat" (landowner) class has arisen and prospered. They are in ostentatious presence at all national festivals in Addis Ababa, notably the annual coronation festival of Haile Selassie, when their young men are seen and heard, jumping with brandished spears or sticks, shouting the loyalty of the "Oromo" to "Addis Ababa" (symbolic for Menelik and Haile Selassie). Among the modern-educated Amhara, and even among many uneducated Amhara of Shoa province, intermarriage with Galla Balbat families is not rare, nowadays, especially if the Galla partner is wealthier than the Amhara, and if the Galla is the bride. This is still resisted among Amhara of Begemdir (Gondar) who refer, in consequence, to any new, unknown Shoan visitor (clerks, administrative officials) as a "Galla". But Amhara from Gondar will not be ashamed to marry a Coptic girl from Tigre.

2. Conquered peoples who are largely non-Coptic (Muslim, semi-Muslim, "pagan").

Certain distinctions are made within this second group. Full Muslims, especially merchants living in market towns, enjoy a somewhat higher prestige, as a respected minority whose leaders are received by governors and even the emperor. (Haile Selassie in recent years, has gone so far as to build mosques, e.g. in Eritrea for them, something which would have cost an earlier emperor his throne.)

At the feast of Ramadan, Muslim leaders, led by their "Qadi" (ecclesiastic judge) call on the emperor to receive his good wishes. In Harar city, where Arabic is known to some of the local Muslims, they listen to Arabic radio broadcasts from the public loudspeakers outside their coffee houses on the marketplace.

The predominant Muslim rite is Melekite, but the majority of thinly islamized Galla know little about such distinctions.[48]

The Galla are the largest group in this category, but, as mentioned before, an important distinction is made between Balbat-families and others. Furthermore, the Galla of Shoa and Wollo provinces, because of their long association with Amhara, enjoy higher prestige than the Galla of Arussi and

[48] Liebesney, H. J. : Literature on the Law of the Middle East. The Middle East Journal, October 1949, pp.461-9.

A E 563 other southern provinces, who are considered more "primitive" in their material culture, and many of whom are "pagan".

A E 797 563 Emperor Haile Selassie has urged the Coptic clergy to "raise to Christianity" even peoples despised as "unworthy" in the old pattern. As a result, peoples like the Agau (incl. the Qemant) who have long been neighbors to the western Amhara, and the laboring Gurage near Addis Ababa, have been converted and occupy status somewhere between level 1. and 2., depending on the wealth they have been able to accumulate by past labors. The Qemants have become favorites of the clergy at Gondar because of their generous donations to the local Coptic churches.

A E 563 [826] The people of coffee-rich Jimma, in Kaffa province, enjoy respect within level 2. because they had been left with internal autonomy during the rule of Menelik II; and because they are believed to be a slightly higher physical type than other infidels (they are considered "wammate", people with wrinkles at the corner of the mouth). Perhaps due to their old wealth based on coffee, slave and gold trade, they are envied; but they are regarded as "people of dissolute moral habits" by the Amharas.

A E 463 563 3. Laboring peoples and classes; non-Coptic; despised, in the old patterns of behavior.

This includes all occupational groups that did or do the ironsmithing, leather tanning, skilled or non-skilled manual labor. Among them are the lower classes of the Galla (mentioned before); the non-Coptic Gurage; the Falasha who live in small rural communities in Begemdir province, who do most of the ironsmithing and pottery-making there, and who practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

A E 563 practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

4. Occupational hunters: lowland border peoples; negroid ex-slaves; all non-Coptic.

A E 563 224 The occupational hunting tribes are considered the most primitive, as pre-agricultural and even pre-pastoral subsisters on the bush, jungle, river gorges and deserts. Among them are the Woyto, the hunters of the Hippopotamus, which is considered by the Coptic clergy especially unclean because of the similarity to the pig. Jungles like Wolkait, in northwest Begamdir, contain such despised and feared hunters, as does the eastern lowland desert of the Danakil (Afar).

A E 563 233 Considered on a somewhat higher level within these groups are the pastoral nomads like the Somali, some of the Borana, and other southern tribes who, when they are better known to settled neighbors, are equated with class 2. When less well known, they are classed not much above hunters, and it does not matter to the Amhara that the pastoral nomads in turn look down on settled peasants.

A E 563 567 The lowest on level four are the ex-slaves, who are referred to as Shancalla if they look negroid, or the more general "barya", i.e. slave (name of a Sudanese border tribe). Only a very poor person, possibly an outcast, cripple, etc., of the two upper classes would consider marrying a Shanqalla. Nevertheless, because of the aforementioned concubinage with female slaves, there are Shanqalla outcrops among even the Amhara of Gondar. An offspring of such a union not infrequently does marry a Shanqalla woman, after converting her to Coptic Christianity. This is pos-

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sible in modern times, though the conversion is solemnized shamefacedly by the minor clergy and with very little ado. The racial distinctions between "persons of dishonorable ancestry" are expressed in the following Amharic aphorisms:

"(One) of unknown father
(Two) wellaj (i.e. father Amhara, Mother Shamqalla:
(Three) barya (i.e. full-blooded slave);
(Four) gabecha (any half-breed, incl. half-Italian)."

In setting them side by side without distinction, the aphorism warns the hearer to look well into the ancestry of a prospective mate, for he or she may be descended from any of these classifications.

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European foreigners are not included in these classifications, especially if they belong to nationalities of recent contact with Ethiopians. But the Armenians, in contact for many centuries, appear in the upper infidel group (the term"arämani" had the connotation of "idolator, hence Cruel"). Today some of the modern Ethiopian nationalists pretend to despise them as "moneybags", while actually envying their commercial and professional talents. The term "arab" has long meant trader, caravan importer, slave dealer. The term for Protestant, probably of 19th century origin, means "enemy of Mary", because that is what impressed the Coptic Amhara most when the missionaries preached to them at that time. The old term "färänj (Frank), foreigner, is still in use, and in rural spots children will still sometimes run after a foreigner pointing fingers as if he were a strange, hence inferior, animal. But in urban usage, especially in Addis Ababa, the term is now applied officially without any derogatory connotations.

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C. Racial characteristics and affiliations of the peoples of Ethiopia.

The terms used in this section refer to physical types only, and are not to be confused with linguistic or regional concepts carrying the same name. For not only is there a lack of statistical data on the physical anthropology of Ethiopia, but no new terms have been coined to describe physical types there, so that linguistic and regional names have been borrowed. While not good practice, in this case it is unavoidable.

The two most common physical types in Ethiopia are the "Mediterranean" and the "Hamite". These types have been best defined by Coon, Garn, Birdsell:[49]

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"Mediterranean" - medium to skinny in build.
generalized to intermediate in pigmentation.
medium to heavy in beard and body hair with a minority of blond forms, particularly in the iris;
medium in head size, with a minimum of paleanthropic features of the skull and face;
small faced, prominent nosed, small jawed, often small toothed;
medium to small extremities.

"Hamite" - Some of the peoples of East Africa and the Sudan seem to be skeletally Mediterranean but dark skinned; they have low to medium frequencies of spiral hair, thick lips, and other Negro features. The body build is extremely skinny."

The latter seems to be a very ancient East African type, according to the excavations in Keyna by Leakey, and the present Somali seem closest to it. Coon[50] points out that this type shows extreme narrowness of head and face, straight

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[49] Races, 1950, pp. 127, 129.
[50] Races of Europe, 1939, Plate 20.

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A E 142 144 nasal profile, non-negroid prominence of chin, curly but not frizzly hair, and black skin; thus constituting a borderline between the "Mediterranean race" and the African Negro.

Another ancient skeletal type, excavated in upper Egypt, is very similar to some northern Ethiopians (Abyssinians), according to the findings of C. M. Morant[51]. He took measurements of skulls and skeletal parts at Badari in upper Egypt, of a people who lived there about 4,000 B.C. Because of the extreme dryness of the region, he was able to determine that their skin was brunet - white, their hair black and wavy. He found that the Badarian cranial type was similar to that of the northern Ethiopian of today.

This type does occur among Amhara and Tigre peoples, but wavy hair is in a minority, sufficiently rare to cause comment. The author personally observed two individuals with distinctly soft, wavy hair, both from aristocratic Amhara families taking great pride in their unblemished ancestry.

The findings of Leakey and Morant, just beyond the southern and the northern borders of Ethiopia, would suggest that Ethiopia contained physical types of "Hamite" and "Mediterranean" characteristics long before the invasion of Semitic-speaking Hadhramautis, about 500 B.C.

E A 142 The Amhara is basically a Mediterranean type much like some Bedouin tribesmen, with oval face, keen nose, relatively thin or average lips which do not curl up, a type most frequently found in the Amharic-speaking provinces. The hair is often curly but not frizzly, and

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[51] Morant, G. M.: A Study of Predynastic Egyptian Skulls from Badaria. 1927, pp. 293-309.

A E 142 rises about the head like a halo, hiding a long, narrow, delicately modelled cranium.[52] A highbridged nose is regarded as a mark of beauty, and the chin is sometimes so sharply pointed that it recalls the features of Tel-El-Amarna. Skulls piled under cave ledges at the Amhara monastery of Debra Libanos (they may not be touched) appear to be dolichocephalic. Stature is medium. Musculature is not pronounced on sight, but Amhara peasants can perform great feats of endurance in walking uphill and for long distances. As a mark of the upper class female, women of nobility accumulate obesity by a rich diet and abstinence from any work. But the average Amhara is usually so narrowboned that it is impossible for most adult Europeans to wear the cotton jodphurs in sizes made for Amhara.

The Galla have larger, well-built bodies, rounder faces, straigher noses and darder skins than the Amhara.[53]

The Shengalla along the western border and inland, evidence all the more typical negroid characteristics.

A E 144 When surveying the complexities of the many intermediate racial and sub-racial strains in Ethiopia, the question arises whether the Ethiopians might not be considered representative of an undifferentiated stage in the development of both whites and blacks. Coon[54] thinks not and points out that, on the whole, the white strain is much more prevalent and much more important metrically,

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52. Coon: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 75.
53. Yilma, Asfor: Haile Selassie 1936, p. 23.
54. Coon: The Races of Europe. 1954, p. 457.

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while in pigmentation and in hair form the negroid influence is seen. His studies of Ethiopians and Somalis have led him to emphasize the principle that metrical similarities of a racial order have little reference to soft parts, since Somalis and Norwegians may be closely related in measurements, yet fall at world extremes in pigmentation and hair form.[55]

This leaves only the alternate conclusion, that all the peoples of this "Hamitic" area, whether Hamitic or Semitic in speech, represent a physical blend in varying proportions between negroes and Mediterraneans of several varieties.[56]

This conclusion is based on comparisons and correlations between the four major ethnic units of this area(from a physical standpoint): Amhara, Galla, Sidamo, Somali, to which a fifth, the Agau, may be added.[57] The following seem the most important features:[58]

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55. Ibid.
56. Ibid, p. 448.
57. Ibid, p. 449.
58. Ibid, pp. 450-457

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Table 2: Major Physical Characteristics of Numerically Large peoples in Ethiopia

	Amhara	Galla	Sidamo	Somali	Agau
Skull	dolicho-meso	meso	meso	meso	mesocephalic
Nose	leptorrhine	leptorr.	mesorrhine (near negroid)	leptorr.	
Skin	brunet-white (lightest) (mostly Lushan No. 21-25; range No.13-34	chocolate brown (mostly No.22-29; range darker	dark brown to black (darker then No.30)	dark brown glossy (mostly No.20; range No. 27-30	
Hair (form)	60% frizzly 40% curly or wavy	30% have non-negroid hair		86% have non-negroid hair	

Hair color black among all, no difference head or beard.

(pilous system)	non-negroid: frequent baldness, often heavy beards; even minority with heavy body hair	less bearded, less hairy	less bearded less hairy	beards like southern Arabs; almost glabrous on body
Eye (color)	47% dark brown 11% light brown 39% mixed	same as Amhara	mostly dark-brown, some black	56% dark-brown 32% black
Lips	10% thin	no thin	no thin	no thin
Nose	straight profile, high root and bridge flaring nasal wings, excavated nostrils.	similar but more broad and flaring	low root and bridge, thick tips (resembles hybrid negro-white, as in American negroes)	

PART II: Utilization of Nature's Products by the Amhara

177 183 Part I established the basis for examination of the culture of the Amhara of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and the elements included in the long blending process which created Amhara culture. The original, native, Cushitic-speaking culture patterns were based on the geographical milieu, influenced by topographical and climatic conditions of the highlands. On these were superimposed several ancient cultural influences from abroad. The Amhara thus appears as a "semiticized Hamite".

The results of this blending of autochthonous African culture traits and Mediterranean-Asian traits are apparent in both their material and non-material culture. Much survives in Amhara culture of the ancient South Arabian culture pattern: agricultural patterns, occupational divisions, dress, written language, customs and beliefs. Finally, the [184] cultural configuration which had long been the privilege of the Amhara ruling class has in recent historical times become shared by all Amhara; and, still more recently, due to imitation, prestige, conquests, etc, by ever-increasing numbers of the original, formerly Cushitic-speaking sections of the indigenous population.

123 While Part I was concerned largely with dimensions of Time and Space, Parts II and III will be more concerned with the dimension and the use of Energy. In both material and 181 non-material culture the Amhara pattern has remained, at first glance, strikingly "early medieval." Ingenuity with regard to material culture has gone into the utilization of the products of nature, including farming and animal hus-

181 bandry, to achieving maximum benefits with a minimum of original invention. Similarly, in non-material culture, a minimum of effort has gone into the elaboration, amendment or improvement of institutions of social organization, but a great deal of ingenuity has gone into spiritual elaborations such as the Zar-cult.

Such a disposition of human energy seems strange and out of balance particularly to the Western mind. How can it be explained?

Perhaps the major clue is contained in the Amhara proverb:

[539] "From cleverness of hand, (you get) serfdom;
from cleverness of mouth (you become) boss."

461 554 This has long been a basic Amhara attitude, even a world view for them. The Amhara has seen much justification for associating skill of hand with slavery and near-slave status, while associating mental and spiritual skills with leadership: as military officer, judge, bishop, or zar-doctor.

If he becomes impoverished, an Amhara will go to a district where he is not known (in order not to shame his family) to work at some unskilled labor. He is then less despised than if he were to learn a skilled manual trade. For while the first can be excused as a temporary mishap, or smiled off as a lark, the latter, by his painstaking application to a manual skill, indicates a permanent association with the psychological and social patterns in the "slave category". Moreover, he may, in his apprenticeship, become associated not only with the occupation and socially lower status of his teacher, but, since the latter is

461 often a member of a socially lower ethnic group (see sec-
554 tion B), such an Amhara would become "detribalized", suspected of having learned occult powers (e.g. in smithcraft), and suspected of being no longer an observant and
563 believing Copt. As a result of his ostracism, he may then
461 very likely marry a girl from the socially lower ethnic
554 group, and his children would be social halfbreeds. If that ethnic group were Shanqalla (negroid, ex-slave), his children would also be racially, as well as socially, mixed, and be relegated to the servant class. Thus the prediction of the proverb would have come full cycle. This process can be observed in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and wherever a market town develops out of the more conservative, rural milieu.

566 Before the abrogation of the major feudal privileges
463 by the present emperor, the feudal lord could and did put skilled specialists to work without specific wages or limit of service. Moreover, the skilled specialist would often be worse off than the unskilled serf. For while the latter would at least be permitted, usually, to remain at his place of origin, the skilled specialists were very often required to accompany the feudal troops and resettle in an alien province, cut off from their kinfolk.

Smiths had to produce and repair weapons, masons to build churches, weavers to make togas and adornments, brewers of honeywine and musician-bards to prepare feasts and entertainments, etc. The chief quartermaster and "treasurer" carried the title "bajirond" and was usually a skilled and trusted master craftsman himself. In reward, he and some of the other skilled specialists might be allocated new

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
463 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qămīs" under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
292 rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled craftsmen never rose that high but spent their lives accompanying troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and embroiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

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176 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itinerant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
754 nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoubtedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("ṭis", or, if several on one large hill, "mëndär"), rather than a village. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts, with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the other side of the same hill.

other side of the same hill.

361 Four factors seem to determine where a hamlet is likely to be formed: (1) Ecological considerations (water within a women's walking distance; pasturage for the flock); (2) kinship consideration - for all persons within a hamlet are nearly always closely related and form a family community; (3) administrative considerations - inherited family ownership of land, or tenancy on land of feudal lord or in a fief of the church, when an agreement for settlement can be negotiated. This latter type is often found among the older hamlets, placed where some historical or legendary event occurred (e.g. a miracle recognized by the local Coptic church; or a military event). When a new church is built in an untenanted area, there are usually several extended families needing land, who negotiate a sharecropping agreement with the chief priest of the local church. (4) Ethnic consideration. Because of the individualism of each residential family group, two hamlets are rarely close to one another. Since they are built on or near hilltops to avoid flooding in the rainy season, there is usually a valley in between where brooks or irrigation canals form borderlines for planted fields. The hillsides, if they are not terrace-farmed, provide common pasturage for all hamlets on the hill. Not only sheep and goats, but even cows are quite used to climbing over fairly steep bushy hillsides to feed. Carrying water is a woman's job; but a hamlet may be located several hours' climb from the nearest all-year water supply. Wind protection, i.e. location of the hamlet in a spot below the top of the hill, for fear of

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [621] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue to obey his father than his new father-in-law. [606] Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 231 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and ther usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gäräggärä") are usually used only around churches.

632 622 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the residential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, *cheqa shum* (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mändär" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "ānd debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

632
622 land. When a person is asked where he is from, he will often give the local name for his "and debber agar" of origin.

634 The c̣heqa shum, village headmen, are supervised by the district chief, "woräda shum", who is also appointed by the 625 governor. The district chief in turn appoints his own police, called "näc̣h lĕbash" (lit. "thiefcathers in white"), who wear no special uniforms, merely the usual white togas, and carry rifles, in the use of which they are expert. They are used not only against petty thieves but against more dangerous bandits also. Their efficiency is commonly regarded as far superior to that of the uniformed urban police. Usually there is one näc̣h lĕbash per half-district ("meketl woräda") or two per district, unless an increase in banditry ("shifta") requires more.

651 Taxes, paid often in produce but increasingly in cash, are collected from each c̣heqa shum, but not by the district chief himself. For this task the governor has appointed a lieutenant, "mislanē", per district ("woräda"), who ranks equal with the woräda shum and expects aid from the latter. Usually the mislanē is a stranger to the district and himself a sort of glorified retainer and account-keeper from the court of the governor of the sub-province ("awraja") who has appointed him; while the district chief is a local man who may conspire with his village headmen to keep local prosperity from the knowledge of the governor's central office. The latter therefore has to rely on the cleverness of his lieutenants, the "mislanē".

622
651 The administrative pyramid rests squarely on the shoulders of the c̣heqa shum. He collects local dues for

622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the
usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely
on him for information necessary to the assessment of taxes.
! The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless lit-
tle disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those
of an Elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates
at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agree-
ment between two kinship groups); he reads out government
proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest ru-
ral market place, including the call to arms in case of war.
He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "dan-
ya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges
on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspec-
622 tion tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is
a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post
as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

[701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the
past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for pro-
viding the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with pro-
visions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
[485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops re-
ceive regular salaries, he still has to play host to tra-
velling officials for their personal needs, since there are
no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of
future favors.

622 485 This change has also lightened the burden on the "*gabbar*", the tenant sharecropper. In the past it was the gabbar who had to supply the "feast" (called "gebber", with ironic truthfulness regarding the provider) for feudal troops on march, in addition to all his other burdens. The cheqa shum was responsible for its collection, for only he knew how much produce, goats, sheep, honey, etc., the peasant had left after the heavy sharecropping rent to the landlord and the "tithe" ("*asrat*") which is still payable to the central government (formerly to the district feudal lord).

651 There is now a new tax, the "education tax" payable even in rural areas where no government schools exist as yet, and payable in cash only, not in produce as in case of "asrat". This tax, too, is collected by the *cheqa shum* and delivered to the *mislanē* who must now issue a receipt and forward the money to the central treasury.

563 361 Ethnic considerations in the location of a hamlet in Amhara territory apply to hamlets of scattered *Falashas*, ironsmiths who observe Mosaic Judaism, and hamlets of the *Faqi*, Cushitic-speaking tanners who were "Pagan" but have recently accepted the Coptic faith and the Amharic language. Since their services are required, they are often permitted to rent land on a hill, the other side of which may contain a Coptic Amhara hamlet. Relations between these hamlets, beginning on strictly economic terms, often become as friendly as the difference between religions, low status of skilled smiths and tanners, and old supernatural
[622] suspicions permit. In case of such residence, one cheqa shum may have an ethnic variety of hamlets under his domain, and may know far more about their "strange" inhabitants and their customs than the average Amhara.

000 tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

571 Thus, the officials with whom the average Amhara has
624 to deal are the headman (cheqa shum), the district tax-collector,
566 the thiefcatther-in white, and the judge of the nearest market town; also, the priest and/or new, young teacher of written Amharic and arithmetic for the first and second grade. Very often, the governor, who is usually a former feudal lord himself, may grant the posts of district chief (woräda shum) and lieutenant (mislanē) to the lower nobility, or their sons; while they in turn draw on their loyal retainers for the more local jobs of headman and thiefcatcher-in-white. In this manner the former feudal structure of human relationships is retained in the old Amhara provinces, despite the official breakup of the system at the top levels. The former feudal chief may even still be addressed by his old title, which has been officially transformed from a military to a civilian significance, but he is still the "telleq säw" ("great man" and conservative pacesetter.

443 This pattern of residential kin-hamlets and feudal
369 relationships changes only in the urban centers which grow out of permanent market spots. The market area is usually located on a little hill, called "arada". Soon a church is built there, and a public area below the hill is cleared of bush to serve as a camping place for caravans, and as a race course for the young Amharas' horse games on Christmas, Epiphany and other feast days. On the hill, the district chief or governor builds his "palace", with a large courtyard for his retainers and office-seekers. The local judges gradually graduate from their table-beneath-the-cy-

443 369 press to more permanent quarters. Arabs set up more permanent stalls at the market. Girls "between marriages" set up their "hotel services" in makeshift shacks, featuring an imported double bed, and foods like the housewife makes at home, including daily fresh beer. A bizarre variety of trade goods pours in, of foreign or domestic origin. Finally, the government sets up an elementary school-- the most recent development, usually post-1942.

B. Shelter: The Amhara Hut.

342 The Amhara circular hut of wattle and daub, with its overhanging roof to carry off the rains, is called "tuqul" (now more often "sar Byet", i.e. thatched house; in some districts, "gojo"). It does not differ basically from the typical habitation of the Cushitic-speaking Galla, of central
[184] Ethiopia. But further south several distinctly different types are encountered, following ethno-linguistic and tribal lines.

The "tuqul" may contain one room or two, through an interior separation or special elevation. It usually houses both the biological family of procreation and their more important livestock which are brought in at night for fear of hyenas. Tuquls in more elaborate hamlets include special storage tuquls, a kitchen tuqul, and even a guest tuqul which may double as extra storage space for the largest beer jars. During the rainy season, when temperatures, especially at night, drop considerably, the family huddles closely around the central fireplace inside the tuqul, and in that 3-month season the tuqul can be considered overcrow-

342 ded and especially unsanitary. But during most of the year nearly all activities during the 12 to 13 hours of daylight are carried on outside. After each rainy season the roof and walls are inspected for damage from heavy rain, hail and tornadoes, and, with repairs, a good tuqul can last twenty years.

The hut-building season begins usually a few months after the rainy season is over, in the month of Hedar, after the major harvest of cereals has been gathered and threshed. A tuqul is usually built in stages, interrupted by other chores. Since there is no danger of rain, the beams, saplings, withes, thatch grass can be selected from forest and bush at leisure, and left on the spot selected. But when a marriage approaches, especially during the main "marriage season", the entire process can be speeded up to little over a week; and if there are not enough hands in one hamlet, other kinsmen and friends can be invited to the hut-building-party, the host supplying daily spiced meat stew, barley beer, etc., thus attracting as many as twenty men. [476]

[361] The first step is to select a location that will blend into the landscape and thus be best protected from wind, driving rain, tornado twisters. Cypresses, which always surround a church on the hilltop, are utilized as partial windbreaks for tuquls of a hamlet just below.

The circular ground floor for the hut, usually about 20 feet in, is measured off by means of a central stick and a rope. The stick indicates where the central, roof-supporting post will be, and the circle indicates the walls. Both the selection of location and the measuring of the ground is done by a semi-specialist, an Amhara who acts

342 as "consultant" and is therefore treated with honor, which would not be the case if he were a fully specialized craftsman. He may be the local saddlemaker who furnishes the wooden framework but will not touch any leatherwork; very likely he is the local weather-expert; he may be the one who understands the qualities of certain woods at a glance. He is rewarded with gifts of beer, chickens, etc.

Once he has marked out the ground plan, the team uses hoes to dig a circular ditch on the circle, about a foot deep, as foundation for the walls. Strong saplings of hard woods are set upright in the trench to form the backbone of the wall, measuring, above ground, to a height of at least 74 inches. The top of the roof will measure another 70" from the top of the wall (measured from the center pole). A gap is left for the doorway. The saplings forming the wall are set so close that they touch each other, but, since there is no "carpentry", no fine trimming or straightening, the saplings remain in the shape in which they grew.

When all the poles of the wall are in place, thinner but strong and elastic withes resembling willow branches are intertwined through the wall saplings, until they form hoops running horizontally through the entire wall. They are tied in place, usually leaving a thumbwidth of space between each hoop. Now mud mixed with straw is plastered thickly to the walls, both inside and out, and pressed into the framework, in a process called "yacheqa margacha". In case of an especially well-built hut three plaster coats of clay are later added to the outside ("märrägä, lëssänä, läqällëqä"), and each is permitted to dry almost to the hard-

342 ness of cement. At this point there is usually a pause and a feast.

The next job is the preparation of a framework for the roof. First the central pole is set in place, preferable a straight, heavy pole with a natural fork at the top. In this fork is placed the strong horizontal beam, "walta" (or "gedgeda") which forms a transversal across the entire diameter of the hut, its ends resting directly on the wall which is reinforced on these two spots by special poles. This horizontal beam later becomes the dividing line for interior partitions, and the base for horizontal storage facilities for gesho (hops), maize, and pre-baked ingredients of barley beer which must be on hand every day.

The men go to the forest or bush to select and cut slender but strong rafters, elastic but strong hoops for the roof, etc. Since churches have the best roofs, a däbtära (scribe-chorister attached to the church) is often invited to supervise the roof-building and thatching. A church roof or that of a well-to-do farmer is thatched with a strong, brownish reed-grass called "kedān" (lit. covenant); another good sort is "sänbälët".

A kind of cupola ("gulelat") is made of wooden rafters (magär) long enough to sit on the walls and even project, while converging to a point on top. During the preparation, the cupola is placed upside down on the ground, and the rafters are tentatively tied in place. The cupola is now set on the "walta" beam, and centered on top of the center pole of the hut. Many more rafters are tied onto the cupola. Paired hoops of vine-like branches of strength and elasti-

342 city ("c̣hemc̣hem") are woven into and across the rafters or tied to them, all the way up to the top of the roof; Sometimes, instead of in parallel rings, the hoops are wound to the top in spiral, seashell-type windings (baṭ). Near that lower border, where the rafters are farther apart, additional shorter sticks ("mäqa" bamboo) are shoved in between, so that no large gaps are left in the roof frame. Everything is tied in place, and a strong roof results.

Thatching is done by the master of the new tuqul, with the aid of men who are considered good at this. They work up from the edge of the roof to the top, then a second layer is laid and tied to the first, then a third to the second. At the top the thatch is tied to the top of the center pole, or to a stick firmly planted into the top of the hut's center pole. This is reinforced from the inside. The outside peak of the thatched roof forms a tuft called "qunc̣ho" (lit. crest of hair), or "sebsab". Near trade routes, imported heavy glass bulbs or oriental perfume bottles are often fitted upside down on this tuft, for functional reasons they hold better against rain and as ornament. Falasha potterymakers create a small tower-like outer dome ("gullelat") over the tuft. A well-made roof may last 10 to 30 years, with repairs.

354 There is no opening for a chimney. The smoke from the daily cooking fire escapes through the door, and in time through cracks in the walls, blackening the inner rafters with soot. Three stones are placed near the center of the hut, to serve as the fireplace.

A door is now made of wooden planks for a good hut or a church, or of bamboo sticks "mäqa" for an ordinary

342 hut. The door is equipped with projecting pivots on top and bottom, the ends turning in two troughs carved into the door-frame.

The overhanging roof protects most of the wall from being damaged by driving rain, and the darkness inside is also a protection against the sun-loving flies. The average hut needs re-thatching every 5 to 8 years, and an additional coating of clay plaster mixed with straw every 2 [777] to 3 years. Old huts, abandoned due to fire, war, death by sickness, etc., are considered unlucky and are not rebuilt. Sometimes their remaining walls are used as windbreaks for garden crops.

Interior architecture consists of the following:

(1) a high-fencelike partition of bamboo ("mäqa") to give privacy to the master and his wife, usually center-right from the door, with a special high elevation on which the bed of the couple is set; another high partition, usually to the left of the door or toward the rear, for nighttime shelter for calves, goats or the family mule. This fencelike, permanent partition is called "get" or "gedgedda";

352 (2) a solid clay bench which runs along half the interior of the walls, on one or both sides of the door, about 16 inches high, called "mädäb", usually covered with sheepskins. On this clay bench men sit during the day with visitor, while sipping barley beer, and at night the children sleep on them, covering themselves with the sheepskins;

(3) on top of a center-rear elevation of rock and clay, up to 42" high, rests the "alga", the master's bed, 15"-30" high. It consists of a wooden frame on four wooden

352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins
[251] ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud)
[415] holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gu-
rej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water
[482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes
a litter ("qarēza") used for transporting rocks, beams,
sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an
[251] indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the center pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "mässob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. [754] [609] This was done in the past particularly at dinner time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and [554] country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates [539] this low regard of a säqäla:

> "Of children, the worst is the bastard;
> of foods, the hardest is beans;
> of clothing, the poorest is näṭäla (half-toga);
> of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

^ Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the näṭäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

342 sega byet - where meat is stored after sundrying in strips;

wäṭ byet - the kitchen hut;

gemja byet - the "treasury" house, general storehouse of tools and weapons, drums, decorations.

ṭej byet - honeymead brewery; talla byet - beer brewery, worked by women.

engeda byet- guest hut;

adarash - reception hut, larger, less solid, used for banqueting;

mänyeta byet - (lit. bedroom house), the master's bedroom hut;

"mad byet" - dining hut for daily dining.

565 352 The noble also has carpets ("sägaja") to sit on or, in feudal tents, to use as tapestry. These are carried from long distances, where specialists live, or are imported. He also has hardwood stools ("dekkwa") to sit on, cut out of solid tree trunks. In a wooden storage box he has one or several burnos, and one or several "kaba" (a dark, woolen mantle). Guests receive their coffee in small imported glazed china cups instead of cley ones, and the reed table is a "massob worq", with dyed braids of imported dyes, in geometric designs.

824 461 C. What Nature Provides: Lumbering, Hunting, Fishing, Collecting

Much of what little ingenuity goes into Amhara material culture is applied to the direct exploitation of natural resources. He would rather spend days and weeks

824 461 searching for suitably shaped hard or soft saplings and other woods and certain herbs, than perform carpentry or much transplanting. Apart from saddle-making, the alga-bed, and simple musical instruments, one can hardly speak of any carpentry.

824 313 In preparation for housebuilding and other activities connected with lumbering, the timber provided by nature is divided, in the Amhara view, into two major categories: Male, i.e. hard wood or strong wood; Female or soft, less consistent, or easily pliable woods. Heaviness or lightness are not major categories (as in Western countries).

Male woods ("wandē enc̣hät") and their uses include the following:

[515] Wild Olive Tree ("wäyra") (olea chrysophylla), one of the hardest; often heavy and massive, found on the edge of forests, brown-black in color, quite oily. Used for construction on plateau, e.g. as saplings for walls, rafters, etc. The small twigs are in common use as "toothbrushes". They are chewed and used to clean teeth and polish gums, as a leisure-time activity after meals.

"Wanza" (Cordia abyssinica), a light but hard wood which is found very commonly and is therefore popular; used to make the yokes of oxen, saddles, low, round chairs and other equipment that takes much punishment in use, such as riflestocks when the original has broken.

"Wulkeffa" (Dombeya Bruceana), very hard, used for clubs, e.g. as pestle in the women's crushing of barley.

824 313 "Balla", after weeks of searching, a strong tree trunk is selected, after weeks of searching, to serve as center port for the new tuqul.

"Tequr enc̣hät" (Pygeum Africanum), actually light red (lit. black wood), a porous hardwood, commonly available, which seasons well.

[278 569] Rosewood, "Kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica) the search for which is a major occupation and livelihood of poor widows, since the bark and twigs are consumed against tapeworm. It is a heavy wood which can take a fine polish, thus more commonly used in noble homes. It is commonly available, at edge of "dega" upland forest.

"qarqaha", a bamboo of river valleys, can grow up to 5" in diameter, commonly used as major posts in tents of feudal lords during their military campaigns.

"yäbäraha shemäl" (bambusa abyssinica), lit. "bamboo of the jungle", a strong bamboo from the qolla lowland, traded from there in former times to serve as a staff for the spear; now used by shepherds as staff, and to fend off dogs, also for some simple furniture.

Male wood is also called "täbot enc̣hät" because hard-[778] wood is used to make the tabot, the sacred tablet inscribed with the name of a church, placed in the inner sanctum, symbolizing the Ark of Moses in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

824 313 Female woods ("enest enchat") are preferred and much more used than hardwoods, if the purposes permit, because they are more easily worked:

"Ṭed" (Juniperus Procera), or (Juniperus Phoenicoea) pencil cedar, is popular as a tall conifer, easy to split, moisture-resistent in rainy season, termite-resistent. It is one of the most important woods, and the only one of the traditional woods that is actually planted and protected by cut thornbushes against goats (which like to feed on the nursling). The grown tree resembles the cypress, and is the landmark of churches, church-yards and church schools. Thus the tree assumes [778] a kind of sacredness, perhaps since pre-Christian times. In the tuqul it is often used as the horizontal, transversal beam.

"Zigba" (Podocarpus elongata, or, Podocarpus gracilor) is a tall conifer of similar properties, with stringy, tough wood, used to make the alga bedsteads and other furniture.

"Ketketta" (Dodonea viscosa) is used for small carpentry, walking sticks; [313] due to its slightly resinous but long-lasting qualities for torch parade at Masqal or wedding festivities. The leaves have household used.

"Qwere" (Erytrina tomentosa), used for slats in simple carpentry.

824 313 417 "Qenchub" bush, which resembles the euphorbia but grows at higher altitudes and is tougher, is cut and

824 313 417] placed on the outside of garden or hamlet-fences, to discourage hyenas, to keep livestock inside -- a natural barbed wire.

Eucalyptus tree ("bahĕr zaf") has become thoroughly rooted in Ethiopia. It is used in construction, especially of the more urban dwellings, as urban fuel, and its blue smoke and aroma is an early morning and evening feature of every town and market-town, where it is a major trade item. During the rainy season it grows so fast that a mature tree can be "harvested" 5 years after the nursling stage. Since it sells for $3-5 Ethiopian, (US $1-2) it is the most planted tree in Ethiopia today. The peasant also likes to use the odoriferous branches and leaves to cover the "dass" the festivity-shelter on marriages, etc., and the leafy branch as chera, flyswitch. Entire hillsides may be seen planted with this tree.

Female woods are also used for other indispensable products:

[386] Ink - is made from the fruit of the "ṭämbälal" (Jasminum floribundum) tree, [534] and its timer is used for the stock of the single-string violin, the masenqo. (But imported blue ink called "nil" is preferred by däbtära scribes.)

824 283 Fibre - for basketry, roof-hoops, etc. is obtained from the "wärqē" (musa ensete) (also called "enset") at lower altitudes, used especially for cords. Rope "gämäd" is made from the bark cut

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called

[324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and

[293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[384] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by collecting, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Pircunia Abyssinica).

824 281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

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wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree;found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "enguday", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awuṭ" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine; gathered in early dry season (Mäskäräm to Ṭer).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. [164 146] Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Amhara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Magnza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called [278] "ṭazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "ṭej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

245 Planting of fruit is done largely in the qolla, outside Amhara areas: bananas, the large citrus("trengo"), mango, guava ("zäytun"), custard apple ("gishta") shaped like an artichoke. Cactus fruit grow wild up to the woyna dega.

226 [554] Fishing, interestingly enough, is not despised, because it is not considered a full-time occupation. It is limited largely to the 3-month rainy season, when rivers are full and fish is plentiful. The fisherman has another source of livelihood the rest of the year, and fishes to sell at the next market or merely to increase the family food supply.

Fishing is also much easier in the rainy season because the water is muddy and the fish cannot see the fisherman--who is clearly visible in the calm, clear waterholes during the dry season. A day's catch of 30 to 50 fish in the rainy season is not rare; in the dry season the fisherman may well come home empty handed. Therefore, in the dry season the occasional fisherman who does try, often uses fish intoxicants called "yasa maskäriya", especially the dried and ground "berberra" seed (Berebera ferruginea). Fishnets, "mäyaza", are used primarily. There is no concept of fishing for sport.

224 In hunting, when it is not done for major livelihood, the concept of sport does exist in Amhara tradition. The pride of the hunter who has overcome a major, dangerous game, has already been mentioned. The young sons of nobles were expected to prove their mettle against this big game, if no war-raid was currently available. Before

224 535 Before going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 554 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 825 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching hamlets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa". [782]

Bushbuck - "dekula", similar but medium-sized ante-

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lope, reddish, more shy.

Ethiopian klipspringer - "sässo", a little mountain antelope resembling the European chamois, with soft, smooth skin. The Amhara is amused by the curious habit of this sociable animal of mixing with herds of tame goats and grazing in their midst, when goats are taken to upper hillsides for pasturage in the rainy season. [233]

Waterbuck - "defassa", large antelope resembling European red deer in build. Brown color; hers of 5 to 10 usually contain only one old bull. Common near Lake Tana.

Reedbuck - "behor", golden-colored antelope, in bush near water. They like to inhabit a specific small territory, in herds of 5 to 10.

Ethiopian ibex - "walya", very wild, red-speckled, on the dega steep mountains of Semyen subprovince. Not common elsewhere.

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Francolins - "qoq" is the generic name for this family of common wild fowl of the woyna dega; resemble the partridge. Boys are adept at hunting them with slingshot and pebble and run after them until both are exhausted. [411 867]

Guinea fowl - "zegra" or "jegra", black, lean, fast runner, found near water.

Partridge - "sörän", common on woyna dega. Wild

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223 goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

Quail - "derc̣het" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills.[59]

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184 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-time or sport hunting. Traps ("aṭmē̈d") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

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412 A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the collecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yäbahēr dengay" (river rock). It is used
135 in grinding and husking. Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

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[59] The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

244 topography provides for a variety of climate at a minimum of distance, is very favorable to diversified agriculture. But, as indicated before, the uses of power have not developed in millenia. Much land is permitted to lie fallow, and slash-and-burn methods are used when old soil becomes exhausted and new lands are needed. Therefore, apart from market villages, no settlements remain on the same spot for as much as a century, usually. The fields are not fertilized; manure from cattle is used as fuel. However, irrigation, though not intensive; terrace farming since ancient times; and the use of a wooden scratch plow with iron tip, give the Amhara agricultural picture an old-Middle Eastern character. Also Middle Eastern is the fact that among the Amhara and other north Abyssinians cereals are the most important field crops.

Ninety-five percent of the population of Ethiopia [134] depends on farming and stock raising.[60] European estimates indicate that half the land territory of Ethiopia is arable. Despite much erosion, the depth of the subsoil is regarded [311] as unusually deep. But much good land is left fallow, because there is enough land for the low density of the population; and because life is fairly comfortable at the old standards of living, especially now that ravaging armies of hungry soldiers seem a thing of the past. Thus, there is little urge for increased production, except by proclamation from the central authority from Addis Ababa which has tried to stimulate it with only modest success. The reason for this lack of success is that the farmer argues, with

[60] Underhill, C.T.: Industry in Ethiopia,1950, p. 21.

241 considerable justification, that even if he raised larger and more diversified crops, they would not find a ready sale (due to undeveloped lines of transport to world markets). Thus the old pattern of not raising more crops than one's family can consume in one year, and for taxes and tribute, continues, especially among the Amhara; consequently fields do not become exhausted as quickly as they would in intensive agriculture.

[427] Another factor was (and is to some extent) the insecurity of tenure. The sharecropping "gabbar" was little more than a serf, who did not know from year to year what treatment he would receive from the next (often absentee) feudal landlord to whom his land might be assigned the next year. This was not conducive to the growth of much sentimental attachment to any particular plot of soil.

[311] Among the Amhara, only about 20% of the potentially fertile area available in a neighborhood ("ūnd debber agär") is usually under cultivation in any one year. On exposed parts of the plateau the crops are usually barley, broad beans, some bearded wheat, and linseed. In more sheltered spots, lentils, chick peas, and a legume called "gwayo" used as cattle fodder (but feared by Amhara because walking in it or lying in it is supposed to cause softening of the human bones). Barley is planted almost the whole year round, starting early with the "light rains", and irrigated in the dry season. In valleys of the plateau, where fields are warmer and more protected, as well as better watered, the major crop of ṭiēff, a grass-like

241 cereal, as well as other crops already mentioned are grown. The lowest and warmest spots of the plateau are usually used for various types of millet-sorghum, gesho (hops). Coffee grows wild or is purchased on the market, as are bananas from the lowland. After a few years of cultivation, a field may be left fallow for five or more years.

[171] [462] [231] The Amhara's irrigation and terrace farming resemble those of Yemen, not of Africa. Farming is man's work, not woman's. The one-handed plow is drawn by a yoke of two oxen, encouraged by a long fibre whip. The Amhara rerely uses other animals for drawing the plow.

Fallow land or new bush is broken during the dry season. A heavier-than-usual iron plow point is purchased from the Falasha ironsmiths, affixed to the scratch plow, and the area, after preliminary burning, is scratched many times at right angles. The stubble and weeds are then piled and burned. But for the actual plowing and seeding, the beginning of the rains is awaited.

312 Irrigation canals are completely washed out in the rainy season, and must be rebuilt in each dry season. Terracing is less common than irrigation, but on occasion mountain farmers of long residence do build low walls of rock and mud on hillsides to prevent severe washouts and landslides during the rainy season.

243 Tyeff (Eragrostic abyssinica; Poa abyssinica) deserves the latter Latin name, for it is the mainstay staple of Abyssinia, except in the south. It is an annual indigenous grass with seeds of pinhead size, cultivated

243 as a cereal grain in Abyssinia since ancient times. It is known in the USA as "teff lovegrass" and is sometimes grown for hay or pasture. In Abyssinia it is the most important cereal.

Ṭyēff seeding takes place, by broadcasting, at the beginning of the rainy season in June; it is ready for harvest in October-November. Sheep are driven over after the seeding to cover the seeds and thus insure maximum germination. Harvesting is done by hand cutting. The [412] grain is made into sheaves about 6 inches thick. Sickles made by the Falasha ironsmiths are simple affairs, a quarter-circle of toothed iron blade fitted into a wooden handle. Ṭyēff flour is made by the housewives, who grind it on a stone mill (wofcho) by hand on the mano-matate principle.

There are tow major kinds of sorghums (durra) grown as staple cereals, "mashella" and "zengada"; a third, "dagussa" is used more for making beer and in poor times. Many of these are sown when the early light rains come in March-April. The stalks of mashella are used to build simple temporary huts; other stalks become fodder. As [857] soon as the heavy rains are over, boys with slingshots and whips are stationed in the fields ~~and on~~ lookout posts atop the "umbrella tree" to fight off the birds who are very fond of sorghum, especially the "mashella".

Mashella (Andropogon sorghum) is of yellowish-white color, and the most desired of this family. The seed is much bigger than ṭyēff. It is often ground and mixed with it for injära-baking. Known in other parts of Africa as

"Kaffir corn", in Abyssinia it is the second most important cereal. Interestingly enough, the Amhara has a form of crop insurance, by sowing mashella with "bahēr mashella" (lit. the sorghum from overseas), possibly imported by the Portuguese. In Shoa province, it is called "boqolo". A whitish type of mashella called "ṭenqesh" is liked for its stalk, which is eaten like sugar can, offerred to a special friend or as an honor.

Zengada (also called "bulē mashella") is a reddish, darker variety of mashella, grown as crop insurance for birds do not like it as well. (Zengada is Eleusina multiforma).

Dagussa(Eleusine coracana or Eleusine tocusso) is a very dark millet, grown as an emergency crop and used as an ingredient in beer. Poor people mix it with tyeff for injara.

Maize (Zea mays), the "bahēr mashella" already mentioned, is often grown also in the same field as cotton (gossypium) on lower elevations of the plateau to "keep the cotton warm and protected from wind", according to the Amhara. Maize kernels, since they are biggest, are boiled with peas to make a filling meal in the lenten season.

Wheat (Triticum spp) called "sendē" is considered a luxury grain (e.g. to make wafers for the church eucharist). It is grown on higher altitudes, in smaller quantities than the other cereals mentioned, and is seeded and harvested somewhat late. A special dark rich soil called "walka" is considered necessary; also plowing 4-5 times.

Barley (Hordeum spp), called "gebs", one of the major

243 crops, and the only one grown all year, thus the most often irrigated. It grows well even on semi-eroded soil, unlike wheat. It is consumed in emergencies, and more usually used in making beer, despite its comparatively poor malting [231] qualities. It is provided as fodder for the mule, the most important animal for human transportation, to give it "strength". Barley becomes more important for human consumption when the rainy season has been shorter than usual. In that case, the grain is soaked in water and then crushed with wooden mortar and pestle to remove the husks without reducing the grain to flour. After drying in the sun, the broken grain called "gebs qolo" is roasted and eaten Some is always in the hut, in case guests should come. The same crushing procedure is followed for preparing malt for barley beer. Late, irrigated barley called "aja", is considered tough but "giving strength", though dishonorable for a guest, and also causing complaint from women that it is "hard to pound" and "good only for mules".

Oats and rice as special crops are almost unknown to the Amhara. Oats ("gēnc̣ha", "arämamo", "qwa"), considered wild, are gathered with barley and used in beer.

In view of the importance of cereal crops, it is not surprising that the farmer refers to them collectively as "ṭeru", which means "good", while garden crops ("debäla") which enjoy a lesser appreciation, are not included in this concept.

[427 804] Rent, tribute and taxes were paid per "madiga", the clay water pot used to measure it. Although this procedure is no longer followed, rent is still quoted in terms of "madiga".

243 of "madiga".

[311] The term "ṭyēff" also has a projection. Good, fertile, fat land is still classified as "lämm tyĕff", in distinction to "ṭyĕff" land, meaning average usable land for cereals.

Mashella is used as a concept in the following proverb:

> [539] "(Both) the seed of mashella
> and the stalk, are good"

This is to say that if the parent had good qualities, the son will be a "chip off the old block."

Numerous distinctions are made in the types and qualities of each of the cereals. Among ṭyēff the farmer distinguishes "bunneñ" which grows and matures rapidly even in Mäskäräm immediately on the end of the rainy season. In barley, the "aja" is disliked because of its coarseness, but its green fields, irrigated, stand out among the sun-yellowed stubble in the dry season and provide a pleasant sight, as well as year-round crops. "Ferey gebs" is a fine choice barley, and "sänäf qolo" (a long-eared variety) is roasted as a daily condiment.

248 Cotton, called "ṭeṭ", is grown in lowland areas. To seperate the husks, a roller of scrap iron is preferred; it is worked on a rock. When rain has occurred during the maturing of cotton, its quality is lowered. The typical Amhara prefers to buy his raw cotton on the market and have his wife or female servant clean, card and spin it. Then he calls in the weaver or takes the spun cotton to him, to make a toga.

000 make a toga.

221 241 Since agriculture is a major concern, much of the annual cycle of activities is centered around it. With the onset of the light rains, fields left fallow the years before are redistributed among the members of the extended family of those who work the land. Fathers allocate fields to their newly married sons or to those who have an added child. The matted grass is plowed before the rains start--"tärättärä--plowing to kill the weeds in the sun; then a second, third, fourth time at right angles--"gämmäsä", "däggämä", "sälläsä". Then the turf is piled, dried and burned. The land is now ready, "masa" land", and when puffy clouds appear over the horizon in the morning, the farmer takes his plow to the field for rains will surely follow in the afternoon.

241 407 The plow is one-handed, derived from the ancient Middle East. The yoke, about 5 feet in length and 3-4" thick ("qämbär") is lowered behind the humps of two oxen. The plowpoint, held in place by two vertical wedges, is attached to the central stick, "manäqo". At first this plow, which is little more than a converted digging stick dragged at an angle, penetrates less than 6 inches, but after about 5 replowings, as deeply as one foot. The plowpoint is flat and cannot turn the earth.

241 Major procedures fall into the following categories:
preliminary plowing - "tällämä", cutting field into furrows, preparatory to seeding. Plow is led around large rocks and ignores small ones, so that

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	very few need to be removed by hand; "fär" is the first furrow in a field.
deep plowing -	"shäräkkätä", in order to raise good soil.
final plowing -	"zärrä", just before or after seeding.

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823 Numerous distinctions are made between types of soil, so that every member of the extended family receives his share of both good or poor soil. Fertility is basically categorized into the aforementioned "läm ṭyēff" and "ṭyēff" types. Finer distinctions show awareness of conservation needs:

male soil ("wändē märēt") -	any heavy, humus-rich, fertile soil.
female soil ("šyētē märēt") -	any light, especially sandy soil. Less fertile.
dark soil -	"walka", used for luxury grain such as wheat.
sandy soil -	"mwac̣hc̣härä", must be lightly plowed so as not to blow away.
mobile soil -	"lel märēt", easily eroded, often left fallow for that reason.
poorly draining soil -	"ränkwa märēt", or "ambaza", gets muddy easily and then becomes difficult to plow.
eroded land -	"borbor märēt", with many crevasses, "eaten by water" during the rainy season.

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alluvial soil -	"borbwara märēt", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.
infertile soils -	"qoda märēt" dries too quickly after rains; "arbac̣ha märēt", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds; "gebgaba märēt", harvest withers at stalk before maturity; "gergera märēt", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit. "fech märēt", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.
hard-to-penetrate -	"gewc̣hac̣ha märēt", plow cannot penetrate readily, "gombore märēt", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow, "c̣hanc̣ha märēt" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

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821 The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeg yalä zenab", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called
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251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

243 [251] expose a full granary to the mercy of the feudal lord and passing soldiers.

Before threshing can begin, about a month after the end of the rainy season, a flat, circular area is marked out with rocks. Cowdung is stamped into the wetted floor, and the sun hardens the ground into cement-like consistency in one day. This threshing floor, called "awdema", is usually big enough to accommodate at least 4 oxen that are now driven over the grain, abreast but not tied, walking in a steady circle all day long, a procedure called "mabärayät". On the third day, winnowing (called "mäshin") takes place, by means of wooden pitchforks cut from a hardwood bush without carpentry (thus usually two-pronged), and a semi-circular winnowing fan about 2 feet long and not quite as wide, made of oxhide that has been stretched on a wooden, semi-circular frame. The threshed grain is covered overnight with branches, to protect it from wind.

On the fourth day, the grain is swept up with simple whiskbrooms made of stalks (e.g. those of wild oats). All these procedures are done as quickly as possible, partly to protect the crop during this stage of maximum vulnerability from birds and baboons, partly because of fear [754 609] of the evil eye. If an unrelated stranger passes at this time, the farmer sprinkles him with water to avert the possible evil eye. Formerly spitting wes the procedure.

In that season many small threshing grounds dot the landscape, especially on river flood plains. Here the plots are usually not more than 100-200 yards long. A minimum team of three men can usually do the job described in four days. Only one person is needed to drive the

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that [263] time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a special condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor-
262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talba", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulqwas" or "çac̣hma". This is not a field crop as much as [281] nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tanners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

241 262 are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "seliṭ", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "suf" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

244 Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (gomän) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (gomän), and a white variety, "aydärgē", resistant to climatic change.

[252] Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

244 539 "She who has not born, will never carry her load;

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[539]

(but a fallow) shembera (field) will bear
(next year)".

meaning that a barren woman will never carry a child in womb, but a shembera field will bear again and again. The Amhara realizes that this legume improves the soil. It will grow in poor soil, resist drought. The harvest is late, usually February.

Peas, called "atär" are also grown in quantity, for similar reasons: they grow well in poor soil, and are especially important in lent.

"meser" The collective term for lentils.

Broad bean, "baqella" also grows in poor and eroded soil, and is much planted. It is then roasted, or boiled, or mixed in curry (woṭ).

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Onions and garlic, the latter called "white onion" are grown in kitchen gardens as ingredients of wot.

Grey bean called "adëngwarē", planted at beginning of heavy rains as fenced-in garden crop, eaten raw, considered semi-wild, and not prestige food.

Gourds, "qēl", e.g. "dubba", pumpkin-type (Cucurbita maxima), are grown inside hamlets and boiled and cut into strips in woṭ (curry-type stew). Some gourds are planted in dug holes, others grow on vines to the height of roofs, on which they rest for support.

Roots, similar to potatoes, called "dennech" are grown in Shoa, but are of minor importance

244 in northern Abyssinia.

[263] Bärbäre is the generic name for the red spicy pepper, a major ingredient of woṭ, and the most important item in the kitchen garden. The strongest kind is called "miṭmiṭṭa" or "säṭiṭa" and because it is grown in Begemdir it is often called "Gondar bärbärey". The smaller the pod, the stronger the pepper.

Gesho, the leaf used as fermenting agent in beer and mead, grows on a bush which is a garden crop.

[302] Ades, another leafy garden crop is grown in a wind-protected area, fenced in; used to purify butter in boiling, especially for use in women's hairdo, for they believe the odor of it is irresistible to men.

Gwaya, a major forage crop of the legume family, is grown as scarcity fodder but contact with it is believed dangerous to humans.

245 Lemons, very small, are grown in a scattered fashion, the only fruit so raised.

Viticulture is a riddle. Grape growing is not in evidence any more among Amhara peasants, but there are local traditions that up to a century ago grapes were grown, e.g. in the woräda (district) of "yäkämkäm qaroda", east of Lake Tana. The name "woyna dega" is derived from the wine-growing, intermediate level of topography. It may have been imported by the Portuguese, or may have been much older. Nowadays

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Nowadays the Coptic priests prepare wine for the eucharist in great secrecy, locked up in the beytalehem", the storehouse of the church, but it is believed that they use raisins purchased from Arab traders.

b. Animal Husbandry

233 The raising of livestock among the Amhara is not directly related to available pasture. The two factors that stand out are the importance of cattle for prestige and expression of wealth; the interrelatedness of livestock with the agricultural ecology and land use.

In the rainy season the valleys are usually waterlogged, and armed peasants take the cattle to the "dega" upland for several weeks of grazing. Obversely, in the dry season when the uplands and hilltops are parched, the cattle is taken to the valley to graze in and alongside riverbeds. Pasturage, "sed", is free--by agreement, usually within the "bota", somewhat vague territorial area belonging to the local church, feudal lord, etc. During the rainy season, the trek upland assumes semi-nomadic proportions at times, ("zallan"), for the peasants may take their wives, bigger children, and households along. Generally, if the fields are very fertile, the pasturage will be more distant from the hamlets. The dry season sometimes causes such severe drought that after the cattle has eaten the stubble off the harvested fields, the growth of calves comes to a temporary stop, there is no mating, and milk is reduced even to cessation. Fortunately

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. 234 415 Milking is done in a very tightly woven reed container ("gerēra") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwac̣ha" or "c̣hoc̣ho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Mänz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary yoke. 251 262 The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

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[61] Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

231
[262] the "great man" (feudal lord) and to warriors at rural, traditional feasts.

The cattle is not fat, since there is no intensive feeding. Even bulls are so patient that children can herd them, and cows are accustomed to walking home unescorted even through urban streets -- including Addis Ababa. With its broad forehead, long narrow skull, well-developed horns, the Abyssinian cattle still bears some resemblance to Primigenius, the cattle of Egypt and Nubia, and probably of Ethiopia prior to 500 B.C.[62]

232 Cattle is slaughtered for meat only in case of a barren cow and when the ox becomes too old to pull the plow. The male ancestry of a calf is given little attention, because it is not always possible, under the relaxed manner of breeding, to identify the paternal animal. Bulls are gelded by having their testicles crushed between rocks, and an ox so treated is called "wäräm" or "mäsina". Since the testicles are not cut, this primitive operation is not infrequently unsuccessful, and such a bull is then referred to as "amäläṭ" and is troubled no further since it is believed that he is so virile that his virility cannot be taken from him without killing him. Bulls are gelded not to prevent them from begetting offspring, but to prevent them from "dissipating their energies" in sexual activity when it is needed for plowing. A rare secondary reason would be to fatten them for sale in preparation for slaughter.

Fully grown steers are fattened by feeding them c̣häw bälē, a mineral salt, for two years, or, where mineral

[62] Ibid.

232 springs ("ambo") exist, by taking them to water there("Hora"). This is done also to increase the milk supply of cows. "Rejuvenators" ("gēbäzayähu) consisting of large pieces of mineral salt are fed to them for this purpose, also. Whenever possible, cows are taken to spots where the light rains have sprouted fresh grass ("chälē"). If the unreliable light rains fail to appear, the cattle is taken to "c̣häqäc̣hɨq", lit. muddy places, i.e. brooks and river beds that retain some moisture and grass, when meadows are yellow, dry, and even crabgrass is wooden and nearly useless.

234 A cow will not let herself be milked, despite the remarkable patience of this cattle, unless a calf stands close or in front of her. But the Amhara find it sufficient, when no calf is available, to prop up a stuffed calfskin in front of the cow. The milking period lasts from 2 - 8 months. While at the climax the cow can be milked several times a day, this is reduced to only once a day toward the end. The calf takes most of the mother's milk during the first month. Then milking is begun gradually, first 1/4 udder, until, at the end of the 3rd month, the entire udder. Italian estimates of the milk production during the entire lactation period vary from 200 to 450 kilos, the average being 300 kilos.[63]

232 A calf weighing 15-25 kilos at birth reaches no more than 80-100 kilos at the end of the year. Both male ("bärē") and female ("lam") cattle reach their full height at seven years, and are almost never slaughtered before then. Despite the slow growth and the small milk supply,

63. Ibid.

232 these cattle are resistant to diseases that killed off European cattle brought to Ethiopia by Point IV. This immunity includes poisonous grasses as well as ticks. They are resistant to changes in temperature between day and night, thrive on natural fodder of little nutritive quality, and even old cows continue to have calves for a considerable period.

233 Several factors characterize the Amhara attitude as agricultural, rather than pastoral, in addition to the emphasis on the hump and the geldin-for-strength instead of for breeding. Herding is not considered a suitable occupation for a grown Amhara adult; there is no cowboy pattern at all, and cattle herding is usually assigned to boys under 12 years of age while sheep-and-goatherding is often assigned to a dimwitted simpleton. The corral is not of strong stakes, but of light, loose thornbushes.

231 556 On the other hand, cattle, especially cows, play an important role in social organization and other human relations among the Amhara. The terms for cattle and for wealth are synonymous. In marriage agreements, the kinfolk on both the bride's and the groom's side promise to contribute an equal number of cows. This means that the child of a poor farmer cannot hope to marry the offspring of a wealthy farmer, under the usual circumstances, unless the rich partner restricts his contribution to what the poor can afford, or unless the poorer manages to borrow enough cattle from a wider range of kinfolk.

To overcome boundaries of social stratification, cattle enables a peasant to present an "entrance gift"

231 [556] ("agäbba") to an important "great man", perhaps to become a "client" in his retinue for protection.

[775] In religious life, the old peasant can arrange for the peace of his soul after death by giving a cow to his Confessor or to the "qēs gabaz" the administrative priest [682] of the parish church, to have masses recited. In criminal law, a murderer in the remote rural areas can still save himself and even prevent a long and bloody feud between families, if he can borrow enough cattle, in addition to his own, to pay "blood-money", in cows, to the kin of the victim, the agreement witnessed by the presence of a "cheqa shum", a judge, or a priest, preferably all three. Thus there are some aspects of the cattle pattern that are reminiscent of a tribal, semi-nomadic, rather than settled territorial social organization. This becomes emphasized during the upland trek in the rainy season.

233 Though entrusted to youngsters, care of cattle is obviously a task requiring responsibility. Cattle is not taken out until one hour after sunrise, about 7 A.M., when the dew has dried. During the hot dry season, cattle rest under umbrella trees and other shade from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., so that the grazing period away from the hamlet is not long. Before dusk, by 6 P.M., they are taken into the hamlet enclosure or corrall, or even into the hut, for hyenas may come early.

The cash value of cattle is low, primarily because of the distance and poor transportation to world markets. [281] The hides, a major export item, are of low cash value because this type is not tanned, merely sundried, and "book-folded" for export.

233 folded" for export.

Sheep are raised primarily for meat. They do not figure in social organization except as minor gifts (including entrance gifts). They are small in stature, and so inexpensive that the sheepskin can often be sold for 1/3 the cost of the entire animal. The woolly skins are used as cloaks, bedcovers, etc. The sheep is not bred for wool, only for meet, especially for the fattail ("lat") which is as prized as in other Middle Eastern areas. The wool (yëbëg ṭëgur) is not very long, and is used to stuff pillows in urben areas. [286] Wool weaving is a local specialty of remote districts, now dying out due to competition of modern, imported blankets, but formerly used to make the black, Arab-type "burnos".

Goats as well as sheep are usually entrusted to an ex-slave or a simpleton, or very small children, when on pasture. Domestic goats ("feyël") are raised because of [281] the cheapness of their meat, and the skin which is tanned by the Faqi, and made into parchment for church literature, [232] etc. To fatten rams, their testicles are crushed between rocks, and the resulting animal is called "qeṭqeṭ".

231 Horses are small, wiry and very enduring. They are the animal of the young aristocrats in warfere, in games showing prowess. Mules, small, wiry, and intelligent, cost at least twice as much as horses. They are preferred by travellers and older persons, and are used as the animal of honor ridden by the veiled bride when she is taken to her bridegroom's hamlet. If they can at all afford it, a Senaar mule is preferred, and for the bridal

231 party preferably a white one. Senaar mules are as big as Ethiopian horses, being the offspring of a large Arabian male donkey and an Ethiopian mare (horse). A good Senaar mule may cost twice the price of an Ethiopian mule, especially when actually imported from the Senaar (Sudan). Its strong but ambling gait ("täkolkoloch" or "säggärä") is due to the work of the expert trainer. A donkey is the cheapest of all animals of transportation, very small in stature, and never ridden except in jest by very small children. All these Ethiopian animals are surefooted on steep hills, the Ethiopian mule most of all.

232 Many Livestock diseases are endemic. The more common are:

Mouth disease of cattle - "maz" (Shoa "qefd"), transferred by licking. Treatment is often the same as that traditionally given humans for syphilis, including bathing in hot springs.

Wasting disease - "gordäbeta", or "gorba" for short, which affects cattle and other horned animals; believed caused by evil eye (buda).

Broken-windedness of horses - "nedfat" (lit. pricked), believed caused by evil spirit who has "pricked the animal" and is drinking its strength.

Dizzy spinning on one spot - "azwarit", believed caused by demon.

If the disease is of physical origin, a "wogäsha" surgeon-herbologist may be called in. Sores on the backs of mules and other livestock are cauterized with a "guba", a hot iron rod about two feet long, with a bent tip. If

232 the sickness is believed of magic origin, a däbtära may be called, or a zar doctor consulted. One often sees large nicks cut out of the ears of livestock, especially cows, where pieces have been excised and fed to the spirits on the principle of "pars pro toto".

235 Chickens ("doro") are small, look undernourished, and lay very small eggs. Little clay henhouses are built for them. They are cooked in "doro woṭ" (chicken curry--Abyssinian style) in a golden reddish sauce, but do not occupy a highly honored spot in the diet, and at feasts are prepared merely to add variety to the menu. Until recently eggs were not sold but given away. Even now they are very cheap. No attempt is made to breed fowl.

231 Beekeeping is one of the few ways the farmer has to obtain some ready cash income. As soon as the rainy season is over, and fragrant wildflowers carpet the landscape, the time for swarming has arrived. The farmer prepares a hollow cylindrical reed basket (called "qäfo"), with one end narrower. This he places in the fork of a tree. Sometimes it is made from the bark of the "elol" or "lol" tree. It has an exit, "fenc̣hu". Sometimes the farmer will capture the queen bee ("awura neb", lit. vulture bee) in a little box and place her inside the basket, so that the worker bees, called "virgin bees" ("dengel neb") because they do not lay eggs, will swarm after her. He is not afraid of stings which are small, cause only a little pimple and heal rapidly. Next to the reed basket he often builds a smaller hive of sticks and mud ("gushgusha"), so that the bees will not have far to go when they decide to break up the colony

23| and form a new one. If he re-uses an old basket, he first sweeps out the larvae (ech) remnants, wax, etc., with the "nebasel" plant which the bees are said to like.

Sometimes as rapidly as six weeks later, the honey is ready for collecting. The hive is smoked out, and many bees perish. [272] Some of the honey is retained at home and mixed with water to make non-alcoholic "berz" when honored guests come. [273] The wax, to which some of the honey still adheres, is rolled over strong cotton or fiber thread and the resulting long thin candle is used in church to illuminate the readings and the processions.

Most of the honey is sold on the big "Saturday market", or directly to the woman in the nearest town who operates a "tedj byēt", a mead house. To make it worth his while, a farmer should have at least five skeps-hives, from which he can realize 50 kilos of honey annually, for which he can obtain about $20. A very big keeper may have as many as 50 skeps, bringing him U.S. $200. for the honey. [273] But the real profit is made by the woman owner of the tedj byet, who pays little for this honey, for gesho (fermenting agent) and for a big barrel to brew mead in, and then, after some months, sells her product, "tedj", a wine-like alcoholic drink, at a price that only noblemen, clerks, town officials, and Muslim traders can afford.

[278] The honey of the wild bee, "terb", is used against trachoma and other eye diseases. But "shame" forbids the eating of such wild honey.

Civet cat has been "farmed" by some in certain districts for centuries, and the musk taken regularly from the

231 gland of the animal was packed in cowhorns, and exported as a fixer for scents and perfumes. But the average Amhara farmer does not keep civet cat (zebāt).

Livestock is perhaps even more important economic property than land. Since land tenure is uncertain and complicated and since the produce from land is usually consumed by rent, taxes, obligations, and food for the family, any capital surplus and private property is largely expressed in livestock, particularly in the absence of valuable tools. [421] Also, land is at best owned by a man's kin, while livestock is personal property.

231 436 Livestock prices at the rural and provincial-urban markets are still quoted in Mariah Theresa Thalers, although the actual coin is now illegal and may not be used in transactions. The compromise that has developed is to quote MT thalers for livestock only, and to pay in paper or coins of the present legal Ethiopian currency at the rate of Ethiopian $1.50 per MT 1. --(U.S.$0.60). MT Thalers are quoted for sale only, because of the significance of such a transaction, while rent is quoted in modern Ethiopian dollars.

231 583 Cattle: An Amhara peasant may own from 1 to 150 cows, mean about 5. A rich peasant may own about 50 cows, a few bulls, a dozen oxen, 5 mules, over 50 sheep and and goats. In giving his daughter in marriage he may pridefully give her 20 cows, especially if the groom contributes an equal number. A poor peasant may be hard put to give his daughter 3 cows, which is a respectable minimum, and may have to borrow two cows to fill that, but he can hold off fulfillment of the contribution until a few

231 [583] months after the wedding, when it seems certain the marriage will last.

231 435 A good, milk-giving cow is worth 50 MT, but an old cow ready for slaughter brings only 15 MT. A farmer needs at least 2 oxen for plowing, and a well-to-do farmer may have about 8. Oxen are not contributed in marriage, but are loaned or given to the groom by his father at the time land is allocated to him for plowing. A good, strong ox is worth 40 MT, but hardly ever is such a one for sale; instead, he is more commonly traded for two male calves. An old ox for slaughter can be bought for 15 MT, and if the skin is still good it may be sold in turn for up to four MT. Thus beef is much more expensive than sheep or goat meat, and is reserved for feasts.

Mule: The average peasant may own one mule, or none at all, since even a small Ethiopian mule costs 40 MT, and a Senaar mule as much as 80 MT. Feudal lords have several. Mules are rented to caravans for ETH$1.-per day; double that if the borrower is a foreigner. Relatives borrow free of charge.

Sheep: These bring from ETH$3 - $6 depending on season more then on quality, though a heavy fattail helps. The sheepskin alone can be resold for ETH$1.50, so that the meat is very cheap and within reach of almost everyone's pocketbook. The average farmer keeps perhaps a dozen sheep used

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for his family's consumption, guests, and gifts, but not larger flocks, conserving grass for cattle.

Donkeys: The average peasant may have 2, to carry goods to and from the market. A good donkey may bring as much as 12 - 15 MT, but an average donkey no more than 8 MT out of season (when no caravans are about to leave. They are not usually rented, but are lent to friends and kin more freely than mules, without charge.

[234] Butter: This is sold to urban people and at big markets, wrapped in leaves. Milk is sold only by personal arrangement, directly to the house.

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Chicken: These bring as little as ETH$0.50, or even $0.25, depending on season and quality. All meat prices rise sharply at the end of the lenten season. Otherwise the peasant does not bother to sell chickens to towns unless he lives very close.

Eggs: These sell for as little as ETH$0.01 a-piece, sold only since Italian occupation, and only in towns. Otherwise the peasant gives them away, or boils them in the wot.

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Honey: Perhaps less than a quarter of all peasants bother to sell honey. Much depends on whether there are bees in the immediate neighborhood, and whether a town with tedj-byēts (mead houses) is nearby. On the average he may put up at least 5 skeps, realize at most 10 kilos of honey from each, and obtain a maximum of ETH$50. --(US$20.) at the market.

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435 Thus, the capital of our hypothetical "average" freehold farmer would total as follows:

3 good cows	150 MT	(ETH$225.-)
2 old cows	30 MT	45.-
2 strong oxen	80	120.-
2 old oxen	30 MT	45.-
2 donkeys	15 MT	22.-
1 mule	40 MT	60.-
6 sheep		30.-
3 goats		15.-
	Total ETH$562.-	(US$230)

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[231] Sales from livestock and livestock produce, in one year, by the average freehold farmer would be about as follows, providing ready cash:

2 old cows	ETH$45.-
1 old ox	20.-
3 sheep	15.-
10 chickens	3.-
300 eggs	3.-
50 kilos honey	50.-
Milk	5.-
	ETH$141.-

With this cash he would buy salt, raw cotton, a toga, some imported spices, coffee, and pay certain cash taxes such as the education tax. These would all be necessary expenditures. The rest would go for other items.

005 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-

423 435 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accurate and reliable survey of "capital" and expenditures--due to concealment of property for fear of taxes. As for the value of their own land, this cannot even be estimated by observation, for not even the owners know the value of their own land. For fear of alienation, and possible higher taxes on land found to be more fertile than declared, they actually do not want to know. Most Amhara land is not even measured, and most have no clear titles, except by local "custom". The value of the tuqul hut cannot be estimated since it is not a cash item and utilizes only the raw products of nature. The same is true of utensils and equipment. Even the plowpoint is bartered rather than purchased.

C. Dietary habits

252 262 The diet in general is low in proteins and vitamins, but otherwise not inadequate.[64]

The mainstay of the Amhara is a round, thin, limp, slightly sour bread "enjāra", made largely from tyēff grain. After the grain has been handground by the housewife, she mixes the flour with water and lets it stand about three days. Then she pours the thickish liquid on a clay plate (called "metēd") about 2 feet in diameter, covers it with a high lid of tight reeds or clay which leaves much air space. The bread is thus baked for about four minutes on top of the triangular stone hearth. The result is a leavened, spongy-surfaced but flat-bottomed limp bread about 1/4 inch thick, and about 2 feet in diameter. The meat-curry is

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[64] Simmons, et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. p.64.

252 poured over several layers of it; or spiced butter is smear-
262 ed; or, especially in the fasting season or while travelling, condiments such as nug-paste or talba-paste are smeared. Variations in the preparation of enjara include some kneading during the fermentation process, adding some old enjara to aid in leavening, polishing the plate with oilcake of nug or talba to prevent sticking, using straw for the fire so heat will be spread evenly and uniformly.

Unleavened bread, "qiṭṭa", is baked mainly as a staple for travelling. The flour may be of other grains (e.g. wheat) or of a mixture of sorghum, barley, dagussa, even shembera. The flour is allowed to remain in water a maximum of 5 hours. If even less time, it is called "afla qiṭṭa", doubly unleavened. This bread is also baked when in great hurry to leave, as in warfare, and the Falashas believe that this was the "unleavanede bread" baked by the ancient Israelites on their Exodus from Egypt.

Another travel mainstay, elaborate to prepare, is a soggy, but not liquid, mixture of enjära and wot meat-stew, called "fetfet". It is carried in a reed basket which has been covered by a finely tanned morocco skin.

Another type of bread, thicker, more consistent, and resembling European varieties, is collectively called "dabbo". It is baked only for rare occasions, such as religious feasts, e.g. "mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross. Therefore, it is usually made from the luxury grain, wheat, and only the poor add barley or ṭyēff; to stretch the wheat. The grain is first softened in water; then husked in a wodden mortar; then ground into fine flour. This is then knea-

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Page 135 lacking in numbering only.

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252 ded, with water, in a wooden bowl, "gäbätē". Various spices
262 and condiments are added. The dough is left to rise at least 5 hours, and the meted plate is preheated. Leaves of "koba", or the large leaves of the "embush" plant are spread on the meted plate (preferable banana leaves when available). After the clay plate has been rubbed with "ketketa" leaves (Dodonea viscosa), and the dough is evenly spread on the leaves, and covered with more leaves, a clay lid is sealed around the edges with mud. Wood from the hearth is now placed on top of the lid, until only glowing embers are left underneath. With a properly smoldering fire the dabbo can be baked in two hours; but for flavor the dabbo is left sealed for some hours more. The result is a massive bread, about 2 inches thick, 2 feet in diameter, with distinct crust, and very tasty. Only in the wealthier monasteries, where it is referred to as "dabyē" is it a daily staple. (e.g. in Däbra Libanos it is cut into four quarters, and each monk receives a specific number of quarters according to his rank) Variations of baking include pouring the dough in more liquid form, or baking the leaves filled with heavy dough in hot ashes rather than in the clay plates.

The second most common item of food is the "woṭ", a peppered spiced sauce which may or may not contain meat. Innumerable variations exist: this is usually the only dish in which the housewife has the opportunity to develop her own recipes, by adding certain spices, etc. Some of these spices are even imported from Yemen and are for sale at all major markets, even remote ones, although most spices

252 262 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every husband of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Ṭena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye). This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella Foenumgroccum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbärē and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbärē, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties. Wild Thyme, "ṭosen".

Garlic, called "näc̣h shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wọt".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

263 "afär kochär" resembling nutmeg.

Capsicum (Cayenne Pepper), possibly introduced by the Portuguese. Called "qundo bärbärē".

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[263] A number of these spices are pre-mixed, some added later to the woṭ. A mixture of bärbärē powder, a salt called "duddus", and garlic, called "awazē", is kept as a staple and also carried by travellers. Vegetables such as cabbage ("gomänzär") and pumpkin slices ("dubba)" are boiled in the "wäṭ". Sesame seed ("säliṭ", Sesamum indicum) add purplish spots of oil content to the woṭ. Aroma is added by "senbul" (Spica celtica), expensive and therefore rare.

The most common woṭ is "qay wät". Chick-peas are pre-fried with red onion. Water, mashed red pepper ("delleh") and butter are added, stirred and heated. Finely sliced meat is then added, and black spice (tequr azmud) is sprayed over the boiling mixture. More water is added and stirring continues. . Some add a bit of barley beer, others pea flour.

When fresh beef is used on Sundays or at special feasts, the red pepper woṭ is called "zegen woṭ". The meat is lightly boiled, and minced; onions are minced and slowly roasted, and the whole is boiled with pre-roasted fenugreek spice, and with red barbare pepper. Then butter is added. When this is well cooked, and the host can afford it, the following spices are added: white azmud ("näc̣h azmud"), black azmud (both thyme); ginger; sweet basil; cardamom seed. After cooking, capsicum is sprinkled over the settling stew, and other spices according to individual preference.

252 262 For the less well-to-do, the cheapest meat is chicken, and this red pepper stew is called "qëy doro wäṭ". Slaughtering, even of chicken, must be done by men. The pious pronounce the invocation, "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity"(because of the Monophysite faith). Then the housewife takes over, removes the feathers in boiling water, singes the skin, inflates the outer skin by blowing into the cut skin near the throat. She then cleans the chicken and rubs it with pea flour. Inner organs and wings and legs are washed with salt and lemon juice, then lightly roasted. In another pan, minced red onion, red pepper and other spices are fired in butter, water is added and stirred, ground salt is powdered over it. Then boiled, shelled eggs are added. Now all chicken parts are boiled with this prepared mixture, in a deeper clay pot.

Whenever any of these vegetable or meat stews is boiled without red pepper, the stew is called "alecha", and, unless this dish is added to the menu for variety, it [758] is considered a poor substitute. It is given to very young infants and to persons with intestinal ailments, and so [576] constitutes a symbol for weakness. (It is a major insult to call a man "alec̣ha", beceuse the term also means "impotent".)

Most often alec̣ha is boiled with chicken, "yädoro alec̣ha". Red onion is preferred in butter, in a clay pot ("dest"). Peeled vegetables such as tomatoes (in urban areas) and water are added. The chicken, disjointed, washed and dried, is boiled in this. Powdered ginger, cloves, green pepper without seeds, sweet basil are added, 252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special
feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär",
[164] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This
brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken be-
cause it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no
[755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every
two months with "kosso", still a major institution among
the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bär-
bäre, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards.
[515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fin-
gers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in telba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very importent in the long lenten sea-
[784] son and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average
Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other ani-
mal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The sta-
ple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero":
mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

252 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed
262 oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for
[272] the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of tyeff flour boiled in salt water, called "Muq".

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernels "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It
[272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving, However, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjära" and "woṭ"; and the heavier supper, "erāt", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

252 Butter is made in a large gourd ("gurna"), plugged with a wooden prop. The housewife shakes this back and forth, much like Middle Eastern nomads shake it in skins. The butter that results resembles Indian ghee, and is called, at this stage, "goräñña". For human consumption it is then usually boiled with spices, especially bärbärēy, but not with selt. To cure it further in order to make it sweet, delay rancidity, etc., butter (qebyē) is further boiled with one or several of the following spices in the process known as "yäqebyē mantäriya", "yäqebyē anäṭaṭär":

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bark of ginger	- quaräfa zenjebel
cardamon seeds	- korärima
thyme	- azmud
garlic	- näc̣h shenkurt
sweet basil	- bäsobela
saffron	- erd
wild thyme	- ṭosēn

302] Since most of these spices are expensive, butter intended for ornamental pomade of women's hair is boiled instead with leaves of the "ades" bush, which grows wild.

This process is "ades qernefad".

273 The most important, daily drink is ṭälla, the barley beer brewed by the housewife. It is little different, basically, from other African barley beers. Men almost never drink water (though the barley beer may be very weak), partly due to their fondness for "sweet", i.e. only slightly fermented beer. After three days of storage, the Amhara begin to complain that it is "too bitter", and let the women drink it up.

273 The preparation proceeds in steps at long intervals (up to a year), but the final stage takes 1-2 days only, to prevent "bitter" taste. There is nearly as much discussion over which women brews the best ṭälla as of who makes the best woṭ, though the opportunity for individual recipes is much more limited.

In most cases, the fermenting agent is "gēsho" (Ziziphus mitis), the leaf of a bush that is semi-domesticated, grown inside or near the hamlet. The shiny green leaves are dried. Then the housewife washes the big beer jars, dries them, fumigates them with olive wood for at least 15 minutes. She prepares the malt, "beqqel", by fermenting barley in water for 3 days, while in another jar she mixes sorghum varieties, dagussa, or zengada (Eleusina multiforma) with water, and lets it also ferment for 3 days. Then she dries and bakes the malt into bricklike consistency, and stores this "abshello" on the horizontal rafters of the hut, ready for quick use.

When consumption time nears, she breaks up some bricks of abshello into another freshly fumigated jar, adds gesho and some fresh "beqqel", and wets the mixture slightly. After 3 days it is ready for use. The morning of each day she takes some of it, places it in a big pot, and fills it with water taken from the river. After 6 hours of settling, the beer is ready for consumption. Leftovers (e.g. from feasts) begin to carbonize a bit after 3 days, and, just when the European begins to enjoy the slightly alcoholic drink, the Amhara declares it "bitter" and unfit.

Variations include: The use of other grains, even

273 wheat, in place of barley, after roasting, grinding and baking. "diṭṭa" leftovers may be used in place of abshello. A rich man may add honey at the final stage to increase the sweetness of the "ṭälla". To increase alcoholic content, mashella can be added. But for the average peasant it is more important to find ways of stretching the daily beer by watering it down, resulting in "asser weha", or "qerrara". A poor man who has no gesho plants and cannot afford to buy the leaves at the market,can gather leaves of the "qäc̣hāmo" or "gerawa" plants which grow wild; also the root and bark of "ṭädjo" (Rhamnus straddo), but this is of low prestige. Interestingly enough, Muslim neighbors who are religiously forbidden alcohol, dispense with gēsho or other hops, and brew a light drink in similar fashion, called "bebuñ" or "qärbäbbo".

Much more alcoholic is mead made from fermented honey, "ṭädj" (which may possibly derive its name from the [554] wild hops). It is the drink of prestige, regularly consumed only by feudal lords, and available to peasants only [415] for feasts. While barley beer is drunk from a cow's horn, mead is imbibed from a widespread, imported "berelle", a small, long-necked, decanter-shaped glass bottle which first entered this area in the last century containing Turkish perfume, traded by Arabs for the ladies of "great men". It has practical advantages: the small opening lets wax and dead bees float to the surface where a flick of the thumb can remove them; and it is much harder for theever-present flies to enter the bottle, especially since the tip of the thumb can seal it.

273 [272] Since fermenting mead is too specialized for the ordinary housewife and it must usually be bought, the peasant consumes his honey-drink more often as "berz", unfermented honey water, and this is what he offers an honored guest, in addition to barley beer. If the peasant consumes mead, he usually does it away from home, at the nearest big market or town where he has gone to sell his products. For two liters of mead he has to pay as much as he receives for an entire kilo of honey (ETH$1.- or US$0.40). He cannot usually afford more and leaves after one bottle.

In the fermentation of mead, "gēsho" or other hops mentioned are used. Six or seven parts of water to one part of honey, plus gesho, are stirred in a huge barrel or large imported tin can. This permits the tapping of the finished product at the bottom, as a jar would not. The first, lightly fermented mead is called "bätäha". Mead fermented several months to a year, more expensive and of higher prestige is "däraq" (lit. dry), a strong intoxicant.

272 Coffee is served black, after roasting, crushing and boiling in front of an honored guest. Salt may be added, African style, but never sugar (which, however, is added to imported tea drunk in towns). Milk is never added, but sometimes butter, even spiced butter. Coffee may grow wild, or may be purchased at the market: longberry from Harar, or from Jimma.

576 A significant culture trait is connected with the serving of any drink. The servant who pours, or the host himself in case of an honored guest, pours a small mouthful into his own cupped hand and drinks it publicly. This

576 is called "qämmash", an important etiquette. Its origin may stem from the well-known oriental pattern of protecting an important personage from being poisoned, and since the feudal lord is still imitated among the Amhara, even by peasants, the custom is still prevalent in rural areas, provincial towns, and even in Addis Ababa.

E. Utensils and Tools.

322 Whenever possible, the Amhara likes to utilize direct products of nature, such as natural shape of branches, branch forks, branches at the right angle (e.g.for adzes), gradual thickening of a branch of hardwood (e.g. for ax handles). Much time is spent in the bush looking for the right wood, for there is no carpentry on any developed level. Sawing is unknown. So is splitting of wood to prepare boards, so that laborious chopping away at a log from both sides would be necessary. Nailing and gluing is still not done in rural areas. To drill a hole in wood, the blacksmith is called and burns a hole with an iron poke. Oxhide strips are used for fastening.

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415 Therefore there are very few wooden utensils. Spoons and forks are not used by the Amhara. During dinner, pieces of enjära are ripped from the edge, to serve as spoon and fork. Then the piece is used to fish out a morsel of meat and some of the sauce of the "woṭ". Iron knives are used at dinner time only at a feast of "brundo", raw beef, when a red morsel is cut off just in front of the teeth.

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463 Preparations of tools and utensils fall into four categories of division of labor: (1) Work done by special-

412 415 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming
463 work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled
work that may require physical strength but is not
time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and
is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and
wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women
(e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps
[321] because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of
iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical
[531] development did not require a specialist. Ornamentation
consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric
[303] nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their
handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. Wooden
[412] mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously
out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze
and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men,
[354] from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On
occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved
by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation
of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and
bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-rest
[407] of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed,
consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom
end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint
[231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is
made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are
collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

321 415 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly [171] of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "ṭewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of däbtära and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324 412 The main stone utensil that men make for the house is the mano-type stone called "mäj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

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[65] Cohen, Marcel: Flaçon Abyssin en corne. [illegible]Tr, Paris 1920, pp.265-6.

324 412 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria is of course entirely unknown.

251 333 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotära" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and ~~left to harden~~ in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamära") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 415 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

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especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typically African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

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The reed table, "mässob" is one of the most noteworthy, for every household has several, in different sizes, and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

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The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the famous sun umbrella, "jan ṭela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qerṭaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

285 415 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large basket of withes, "qerc̣hat", used to measure 26 kilos of pinhead-grained ṭyëff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqaha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramṭa", "akärma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shepherding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("muday") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwec̣ha")

285 [531] There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, entirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 411 857 [244] Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchäf") of a strong fiber ("nac̣ha"). When completed, it has a loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end released at just the right speed and direction. It can stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 412 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melac̣h", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

439 412 perhaps replacing obsidian blades. They are now in turn being replaced by European safety razor blades even on remote rural big markets. These are called "lesa melaçh" 439 415 although very commonly still sold by an Arab trader. The small glass drinking bottle called "berellē", used in place of a cup for mead, has been brought by caravans from the Middle East since the Ottoman Turkish period. The European drinking glass, "berçheqo" is still rare in rural areas.

F. Clothing

291 There is a substratum of wearing skins in all of Ethiopia, sheepskin particularly and even leopard skin. Among the Amhara this appears among poor wandering church students, and in the fact that certain textile articles, notably the "lämd", symbolize the leopard skin of the warrior which he still wore at the time of the accession of the present emperor. This type of clothing is in the African tradition.

But the clothing of the Amhara today is largely of cotton, plus a wool cape for the feudal "great men" or [178] landowning farmer. Both have come to Abyssinia from the Middle East areas: the long shirt, "qämīs" probably came during the 19th century, together with the white Indian jodphurs (that some trace as late as Lord Napier's campaign); the wool burnus is believed to have entered as long ago as the 5th century A.D., together with Coptic Christianity.[66]

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[66] Rohrer, E.F.: Beiträge Zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara. Bern, 1932, p. 19.

291 [439] Raw cotton and cotton sheeting have long been imported, and still are, but the toga (shamma), probably the oldest of the Abyssinian cotton garments, is made domestically, from cotton spun by the housewife and woven on the handloom of the weaver.

The cotton clothing now considered "traditional" is [765] always white. The explanation given by the pious is that white is the expression of mourning, because of the passing from the earth of Jesus Christ.

[294] Tailoring is done by poor semi-specialized Amhara men at "big markets". Garments are made with great care, to follow the traditional style and also fit well. There are no new fashions in these costumes, for the prevalent pattern is conservative: to be properly dressed for the occasion, in the style of one's forebears. Variety exists in trousers: the jodphurs which reach to the bare feet, as former clothing of feudal lords, are more prestigeful than the wide peasant trousers that narrow to the leg just below the knee. The shirt, worn kneelength above the trousers, similarly narrows on the forearm, and is therefore called "ej ṭebab̆" (lit. narrow-sleeve) in the vernacular, instead of "qämīs", the proper name (possibly from French chemise, though no Amhara would admit this foreign name for his "traditional" shirt). The only untailored garment is the toga, but this is used for expression of moods and situational conditions (see "language of the shamma").

296 Laundering is done in or near riverbeds, or brooks, by women, housewives or female ex-slaves, using the dried

296 and crushed, potash--containing saponarie seed called "endod" (Phytolacca abyssinica) which grows wild, but the locations of which are carefully remembered for "harvest". The crushed seed is mixed with cold water on the slightly concave top of a rock, or in a cowskin. The cloth is kneaded, stamped on with feet, until a good foam develops. This is done several times; then the garment is rinsed, and bleached by the sun. In time the cloth does become grayish, particularly the peasant trousers which are used more than the festive shirt and jodphurs, but the native soap-plant is kinder to the material than the coarse European laundry soap now available at big markets.

291 There is little basic difference between the garments worn by the sexes. Jodphurs may be worn by travelling ladies of feudal lords, since there is no side-saddle, but the peasant woman never wears trousers. Also, instead of the shirt, women generally wear a long loose heavy cotton gown from shoulder to feet, though formerly the peasant women used to leave the upper body bare, as a symbol of "respect" (as peasant males used to do on most occasions), [853] and for comfort. Above the tied waist, this garment is still loose, and two-year old infants not yet weaned can walk up to their seated mothers and help themselves to nourishment and comfort by simply pulling the unobstructed breast out. Women wear the toga just as men do, but drape it differently on certain occasions.

The old type of trousers, wide at the hips and tapering to leg size just below the knee ("bat tȧhulät") has survived the introduction of white jodphurs ("surri") only

291 among peasant's weekday wear, and on the occasion of a peasant woman riding a mule (e.g. the bride being carried to the groom's hamlet). In the latter, somewhat tighter variety, it is called "lebaleba". Very recently, Sudanese-imported khaki shorts, British-type, have become popular [294] among peasants for workaday wear, and are mass-produced by foot-operated Singer sewing machines at "big markets" of provincial town, This has changed the status of the male tailor to a full-time, urban occupation, carried on by a poor Amhara and only when he is far from the district of his own kinfolk, to avoid shaming them.

[292] The wearing of the kneelength cotton shirt, formerly also of imported silk, the "qämīs", was a special privilege granted by the King to his chief courtiers and feudal governors and lords. This meant that they did not have to bare the upper body even to their superiors, and could, when travelling, demand food supplied from any peasant for themselves and their troops. Now called "ej ṭäbab" (narrow-sleeve) it is urban wear for the commoner, and even the peasant wears it when he is not at work as well as on festive occasions; It is always of cotton. The term "qämīs" is now used only for the full-length, wider-sleeved gown of women, who like to have it embroidered with green, flowery designs on chest and back ("telf qämīs"). Unlike the male shirt, it is worn all the way to the feet, and is tied around the waist with a thin strip of cloth,

[831] The "qämīs" of women is almost untailored, for emphasizing body contours would be "shameful". It is full-

291 skirted, one-piece, and in rural areas of coarse, heavy cotton cloth made by the weaver (shammani); while the "ej-ṭebab" of men is of imported cotton sheeting (abujedid) of fine quality. Jodphurs (surri) are of heavier, but also imported cotton. The Coptic priests in rural areas also wear a type of "qämīs" resembling that of women, but without embroidery, and much more wide-sleeved, thus called "ejsäfi".

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177 In very recent times city women of the younger generation in Addis Ababa have compromised with modernity by wearing a "qämīs" of light, imported, white rayon, thus bringing the development full circle. It is, however, still ankle-length, and the upper part of the body still covered in addition by a light version of the traditional shamma. Even modern-educated husbands who, as clerks or teachers wear European suits themselves, insist on their wives wearing some type of "qämīs" plus shamma. Male wearing of the wide-cuffed European trousers ("bolalē") has taken hold only in Addis Ababa and among modern-educated clerks and teachers. The nobility takes pride in resisting and in wearing jodphurs; and rural teachers still imitate them rather than modernity (much as they teach that the world is round without believing it themselves.).

291 The jodphurs, wide at the waist, are held by a cloth belt, "ṭebṭab", This narrow belt of heavy cotton is used also for other trousers, and for the belt around the "qämīs" [843] of women. Pregnant women wear a long cotton girdle, 6 inches wide, beneath the qämīs, ("mäqännät"), for support, and use it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth.

291 it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth. Old men use it for the latter reason, (but call it "deg", to differentiate it from the girdle of pregnancy).

The most important, and most varied, traditional garment of both sexes and all social levels among the Amhara, is the cotton toga, "shamma". It is made from cotton spun at home and then fashioned by the weaver. It is untailored, but draped with care.

In addition to the average shamma, there is a double shamma (called "kutta") for warmth and longer wear; and a half-shamma, usually of finer weave, for prestige (called "nätäla") used only for daytime wear. Size specifications vary between rural and urban usage, and between districts and provinces.

A full size rural shamma measures about five feet
294 by 10 feet, when finished, To achieve this size, the weaver produces a piece of cloth 2-1/2 feet x 20 feet, cuts it in half, places the borders together, and sews lengthwise. This is the most common garment of the peasant during the work-week, in the dry season, day or night, male and female, It usually has a simple, narrow, dyed border, which is colorfast only in cold, water.

The "kutta", when completed, is usually 6 feet wide and up to 15 feet long, cut and sewn in similar fashion,
291 and of coarse, tightly woven cotton. It is worn at night,
513 especially in the rainy season, and by travellers, for it can also be used as a blanket. Today, even in the center of Addis Ababa, one sees peasants curled up head to foot

291 513 in this kutta, resembling a motionless sack, stirring only when the rays of the sun begin to warm.

The "nätäla" is more loosely woven and about half the size of a "kutta". Because it was quickly made, used little cotton, and was therefore much cheaper, it was the dress of the poor and consequently despised. But in very recent times it has been finely made, some even in a factory in Dire Dawa city, and it is now finely embroidered near the border where the dyed strip used to be.

291 531 "Jano" or "jano kuta", as the name indicates, was the fine shamma of royalty, in chich case warmth was no consideration, and border embroidery was of purple, green gold and other colored silken thread, in various designs. "Ṭebäb" or "derb jano" was embroidered with arabesques, and nowadays has often been changed to diamonds in the national colors of Ethiopia; green, yellow, red. Now urban women wear it, and it is becoming festive dress even for peasant women.

291 The roughest, coarsest and most durable workaday shamma of the peasant has no border ("goda"). Sometimes the "ḳämīs" of the peasant woman is made of this tightly woven material. In the old times it had a very broad red border (a foot wide) and since it was worn by the freehold farmer, it was a garment of honor among the peasantry, even in the time of Menelik II. Now it has lost prestige, except among the more remote rural landholding kin, and it is not produced any more.

The "burnos" hooded cape of wool, is an ancient garment worn by Amhara feudal lords and royalty, both men

291 and women, as protection from rain and cold in the rainy season. Finely embroidered, it was also a garment of high prestige, since the king himself presented it to his liege lords from his own royal workshop, frequently made by imported artisans from the Middle East and their Abyssinian [439] apprentices, often slaves. It is still worn by feudal lords in remote rural areas, but has to be bought from caravan traders who import it, though there are rumors that they were until recently still produced in the district of Bäjäda in remote, mountainous Semyen sub-province.

292 The old prestige of the "burnos" lives on in the "kābā", the royal (hoodless) cape or mantle, of dark wool with embroidered stiff collar and borders, draped over the shoulders, and reaching to the ankles. This garment is still the prerogative of royalty, of nobility on festive occasions, and of priests. It was the garment seen in Western newsreels at the time Emperor Haile Selassie wore it in Geneva and London, even with his European suit.

286 During the time of the roving Amhara feudal chiefs, even in Menelik's time, when capitals were no more than tent cities, carpet making was extensive. Some were used as tapestry, by the nobility. The best were imported, but there was considerable domestic production. A type called "kozē" was woven, surviving for a while in remote areas such as the aforementioned "Bäjäda" district in Semyen, but not of any economic significance. It died out as an art, with the death of the old craftsmen, increase in imports, and the end of the tent cities. Cheap rugs have replaced the carpets, just as imported black chintz has replaced

286 the expensive, woolen, hand-made "kābē", among the common priesthood.

291 Headdress, except for the cap ("qob") of monks and nuns, and the turban of priests, is not worn by the Amhara. Only in the cold upper "dega" do the shepherd make a kind of helmet of reeds or plaited wool, covering the ears. The first breach came about a generation ago when some of the [177] nobility began to wear European hats of soft felt, with wide brims. More recently, the tropical helmet of British and Italians has become popular among educated clerks, teachers and provincial judges, and even commoners of distinction are beginning to weave an imitation tropical helmet of reeds, to serve as a miniature, personal sun umbrella. But the vast majority still use no headgear, and protect themselves from the hot sun by wrapping a portion of the shamma around the skull. The shamma thus provides protection from cold, heat, dust, rain--and shields the bashful (see language of shamma).

Most Amhara still go barefoot. Sandals used to be the prerogative of royalty, and though this prohibition no longer exists, leather sandals, or rubber sneakers from Egypt are still only in limited use, mainly in towns. Shoes imported from Europe are expensive and are worn only by highly educated individuals, officials in Addis Ababa, etc. The average Amhara, including some rural nobility, prefers to continue barefoot. Rural nobles even ride barefoot using the traditional stirrup with an iron ring for the big toes. Sandals made of leather were used by travellers. They

291 are only of the last items to increase in prestige in very recent years, due to growing imitation of living patters of Addis Ababa. Coptic churches still require removal of footgear.

G. Sanitation.

515 Two traditional traits of health care and sanitation have already been mentioned in connection with the direct use of natural products: polishing teeth, and washing clothes.

[824] Hardwood twigs such as wild olive (Olea chrysophylla) called "wäyra", or of the "ahya" or "täçhema" bush (also softer ones of the type that Somali use in lower elevations) are held between the lips, by men or women, after meals. Even old men (in rural Ethiopia this means men over fifty) have most of their teeth as a result, with little sign of wear or decay. Much of this is due to this habit of polishing teeth and gums at odd moments, much as an American might chew gum. Before this polishing, the end of the twig to be used is masticated thoroughly, and the fibrous ends are then used. The Amhara belief is that this keeps the teeth in sharp condition--they do not do it with the idea of cleaning food remnants out of the mouth. The mental association is then of a bird sharpening its beak.

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[824] Already noted also is the use of the potash content of the seed of the "endod" bush (Circunia abyssinica, or, Phytolacca abyssinica), for laundering and washing.

Little more positive statements can be made about sanitation. When water is short in the dry season, which

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or 514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

364 Hyenas, jackals and vultures are not interfered 825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

165 Abundant sunlight during 9 months of the year, coupled with the scanty clothing of small children, probably gives them their best chance of survival in addition to the long breast-feeding. Nevertheless infant mortality is very high, and in an average family half the babies born die before reaching the age of 5.

164 Flea infestation of humans can be described as 136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are someqhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected 136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always 164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re- 744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

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164 government has now made free injections available at "big
549 markets" of provincial towns. Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nussance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("chera") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken
231 into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an added "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for
548 the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between marriages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes.
759 When surface lesions appear, the native "wogäsha" is consulted; or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

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[67] Guthe,Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O.Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pp. 85-138.

164 this is limited to occasional feasts due to the comparatively high cost of beef, and the "kosso" cure does seem to work. Dysentery kills many infants; amoebic dysentery sickens and kills adults also, especially near towns where the population is denser. The opening and increase in trade route communications since the Italian occupation has led to an increase in tuberculosis epidemics.[68]

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164 Brooks, rivers and wells become increasingly more polluted as each dry season proceeds, and just after the flooding during the rainy season. Water carried long distances in skins is not safe either. The housewife, trying to manage as best as she can under the circumstances, carefully covers containers of food and drink, even of water stored overnight.

H. Mutual Aid

476 The simple living standard of the Amhara is somewhat improved by traits of mutual aid.

These may be listed in four categories, according to Amhara attitude:

(1) Mutual aid within the territorial or kinship unit, usually the hamlet;

(2) between neighboring hamlets that may or may not be kinfolk;

(3) within the religious sodality, the "mähabbär";

(4) between individuals.

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[68] Simmons et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. pp.62-73

The reasons for such mutual aid, generally called "wänfäl" or "wämfäl", may be of time, space, economics, energy. The time element enters when a task requires completion within a specified period such as harvesting, threshing and winnowing. This is usually done withing the hamlet extended family, aided by other kinfolk. No remuneration is asked, but return services and a feast are expected. The energy element enters in such tasks as hut-building and roof-thatching ("wämfäl awäṭṭa", lit. he left to do mutual aid). This too is done within category (1), or with additional help from (2). The space element usually involves neighboring hamlets, on such tasks of common interest as digging an irrigation canal, called "bringing home the bread" ("däbbo awwalä"). Also, category (2) may be involved in the common pasturage, "adäbay" or"adäbabay", used by several hamlets, which includes the right to take water from the same brook, collect deadwood, cut branches and reeds for numerous usages. As a result of toleration and cooperation in category (2), ethnic lines may be crossed, for the neighboring hamlet may be of an ethnic occupation class, and/or of another religion, which often astonishes the urban Amhara and even the provincial one.

The factor of economics may affect all four categories, usually in the sequence of 1 - 4. A farmer may lend his team of oxen for plowing or threshing, to a neighbor who has none or has just lost an ox, in exchange for help with his harvest or other service, such as using a donkey or a mule.

Consumption, beyond the territorial kinship group, often takes place within category (3). By way of extension, the"drinking together" of members of the religious sodality known as "mŭhabbär", who also take communion together in apostolic imitation, and who are usually of the same age groups and sex, leads to mutual trust in common purchases for consumption. Most common is the mutual purchase of an old cow or old ox for beef. This would otherwise be too expensive, and it must be distributed and consumed quickly due to the absence of any means of preservation(aside from drying). This mutual sharing agreement is called "qerc̣han", and is even more common in towns than in hamlets, because category (1) is absent and the need is felt for some near substitute, for mutual cooperation. They also share in the money realized from the sale of the skin, after the slaughtering.

Finally there is the economic partnership between individuals, ("wel"), resorted to usually after possibilities in categories (1),(2),(3) have been exhausted. It is more common in towns than in rural districts. But even among rural neighbors, two individuals may aid each other in clearing fallow land or new bush, or sell each other's produce on the market, particularly if they have quarrelled with their kinfolk. But such partnerships are usually of brief duration, while the first three categories of mutual aid are far more enduring.

2. The Division of Labor.

463 462 Besides the dimensions of time and space, the factor of the use of energy is important in material culture. The Amhara of Ethiopia still uses the force of their own muscles as the primary source of industrial power, and their material culture has thus remained basically unchanged, especially in the aspect of human organization of labor.

There is sharp seasonal division of labor among the Amhara, already described in connection with agriculture, the major occupation. This is largely determined by the climate, the heavy rains and little rains, the long dry season; and the very limited conquest of nature by the people in this area, which does not go beyond occasional irrigation ditches. As a result, the seasonal division of labor follows every minute change in the ewather, differs womewhat from year to year depending on early or late onset of the rains. The human organization aspect of agriculture and feasts remains ruled by the weather, which dominates the ecological and religious calendar of activities.

462 463 596 Human organization of labor among the Amhara seems to follow two major principles: (1), Extension of the family organization. The extended family is self-sufficient in most needs for food, shelter, and the spinning of cotton for clothing. Salt and raw cotton are the only basic purchases, and only the services of smith, potter, tanner and weaver are actually essential, though there are a few other cultural elaborations. The extended family is also the major producing unit, in agriculture and animal husbandry. It has traditionally limited its own production

462 463 [596] because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

462 463 554 (2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by [633] sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in trading goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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463 The rural extended family is also the residential unit, the
596 hamlet, and this principle affects the rural residence of the ethnic specialists: the Faqi tanners occupy their own hamlets, Falasha smiths theirs, and, within each ethnic hamlet, the specialists are related by kinship, usually patrilocal as well as patrilineal.

463 Principle (2) here creates the basis forthe ethnic
563 division of labor. The concern of the Amhara is not the time and effort saved by each group doing a specialized task, it is to retain prestige by not working at a skilled manual task but having social inferiors do it for them. Time is not much concern in this culture, for labor is paid by the job, not the hour. Labor is cheap, and since the material culture is relatively undeveloped technically, the work does not require the close synchronization of modern, Western factories. Thus, as long as the primary source of power consists of muscular force and simple technology, the old ethnic division of labor remains satisfactory to the Amhara, and often even to the ethnic specialists whose livelihood is assured.

The Amhara has more confidence that an iron plow-point or pot made by the Falashe is well-made, or that a toga woven by a Muslim will give long wear, than he exhibits if a poor Amhara has learned the crafts and tries to sell him his products. For, he reasons, has not the ethnic workman learned his craft since childhood, from his father, who in turn has practiced and perfected it for countless generations? The Amhara purchaser suspects that a new

463 563 non-ethnic (Amhara), supplier may have done a slovenly job to pick up some quick money, even if he knew the craft. Moreover, the Amhara is convinced that the craft of the ethnic workman, especially the Falasha, is connected with black magic ("buda"), and therefore strong, though evil; while another Amhara individual who may have persuaded or hired a Falasha to teach him his craft (which occasionally has happed in very recent years), will never be taught the magical power connected with ironsmithing, not even from his own father-in-law if he intermarries into a Falasha family (which is also beginning to happen, in towns). Therefore, the product will not be "strong": if a pot it will break; if a plowpoint it will dull soon.

463 563 466 Thus, the ethnic craftsmen retain their patrons, a relationship reinforced also by the personal factor: for the Amhara customer who has established or inherited the habit of trading with a particular Falasha hamlet, where confidence has developed and even personal idiosyncrasies are known, prefers to continue to deal on this personal (or family) basis. This is particularly true since in rural areas the work done is paid for in produce, or in lieu of rent payable by the Falashas for land farmed by them and belonging to the Amhara landholding family. The limitations of this economic, or at best inter-personal relationship are mutually recognized , for neither group would mix socially or intermarry, in the rural district. The boundary line is one of religion as well as occupation and social status. As in most parts of the Middle East, the blacksmith remains an outsider. This is also true of the tanner, in Amhara society.

000 the tanner, in Amhara society.

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565 The values that dominate the division of labor in Amhara territory are closely connected with social stratification, which has been described. While hunters would be at the bottom of the scale, they do not actually have much share in the economic organization. The ethnic occupation class is in the second or third class from the top, depending on how much change has taken place in the local status of "conquered populations" since the 19th century Amhara victories. Actual ex-slaves, usually negroid, are below this level, usually sharing the same status as hunters. The Coptic Amhara, who is occupationally limited occupies the top class, subdivided into feudal lords and sharecropping peasants, with landholding families in between.

But this is a division into classes rather than into castes. For, although occupations tend to be hereditary, and most individuals follow the ethnic specialty of their fathers, they are not under a strict obligation to do so. Emperor Theodore was a usurper of commoner origin, whose mother made a living by gathering bark of the Kosso tree, the lowest occupation of an Amhara. The ethnic classes are more strictly divided by religious identification. In the rural districts there is still no intermarriage between religious or racial groups. In town, persons of the same socio-economic level do intermarry, e.g. "woyto" hippopotamus hunters or ex-hunters, and Shanqalla ex-slaves. Both are likely to work as unskilled servants or laborers, in a town such as Gonder. In general, the class system of Amhara territory is somewhat sharper than in most Middle

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563 East countries, but it is not the elaborate caste system of
[565] India.

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438 Regional division of labor plays only a small role. When it does occur, as in case of the "burnos"-weaving and carpet-making of spots in Semyen, which survived until recently, it is a case of local survival of a craft that has experienced culture loss, fallen into disuse elsewhere. This is also believed to be true with regard to viticulture which seems to have been lost during the 19th century southeast of Lake Tana. It is the story of ancient Aksum all over again, where a 1700-year old stone cistern is to this day the major water supply and a marvel to the present inhabitants, as are the obelisks, stone steps, etc. Where regional specialization does play some role, it is in a very limited sense. Certain districts of Begemdir province, for example, are more inhabited by Falashas than others, and the iron plowpoints and pottery may be preferred from there, especially in the dry season when travel is possible. The better togas are made by Muslim Ethiopians in suburban Gondar town. Hamlets of tanners are also encountered more often in the vicinity of a town like Gondar. Since so many basic crafts are handed down only in the family system, modern changes de-emphasizing the family economy, plus importation via Italian-built roads, will increasingly cause culture loss, especially in the rural districts. Already the contemptuous reference to "balagar sera" (rustic workmanship) are beginning to heard among urban Amhara (e.g. in connection with the plow and pottery).

463 561 Division of labor by age is not elaborate in Amhara culture, and will be mentioned in connection with the life cycle. Children perform useful work from the age of seven on. Boys watch cattle, and the harvest against birds and baboons. Girls help in the house and take care of younger siblings. Both do the milking. Adults exercise authority and supervise the community. Elders (anyone 50 or over) are respected and do no hard work. They may supervise harvesters from high points, warn of fire or locusts because of life-long experience, reprimand shepherds. Widows very often become nuns, more often than widowers become monks. For old nuns can still do cooking and baking in monesteries, while old men would not be economically useful there, and usually are too old and illiterate to join the clergy even as acolytes. However, priests who have become widowers very often become monks and continue their former activities.

[883] Girls are considered adults, for work and marriage, at 12-12; Boys usually 4-5 years later. Sons of priests and feudal families usually begin to attend church school at seven. Even today, in places where modern-type elementary schooling has become available, this pattern continues, and the sons of peasants, if they live near a town and have a chance to be entered at all, at least for the first 3 grades, are usually 11 years old in the first grade, and have already served their parents for 5 years in pastoral and harvest occupations.

Among the ethnic specialists, the harder physical labor is done by male adults in their prime, and lighter tasks allocated to children, elders and women. Thus (e.g., within one Falasha hamlet) one will usually see the adult

463 561 males in their prime occupied, in teams of fice, at smithing a plowpoint; while the elder weaves a toga at his handloom, as fast or as slowly as his physical condition or pride permit. [462] Pottery is made by the Falasha womenfolk, and men do not participate other than to load finished pottery on donkeys for transportation to the customer.

A. Division of Labor by Sex.

462 Whenever uses of energy are not developed technologically, there is usually a sharp division of labor by sex, in which the routine everyday labor is largely left to women. This is true in Amhara society. Women are tied to household tasks and babies, and therefore tasks that are bound to a fixed time are usually left to women. By extension, since water-carrying is the woman's task, pottery-making is done by *women* of the ethnic specialist class, usually Falasha. On the other hand, tasks involving tools rather than utensils, and tasks not bound to a fixed daily routine, are usually male occupations in Amhara society.

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Table 3: Division of Labor by Sex

Male occupations	Female occupations	Both
agriculture	kitchen work(except slaughter)	sale of products on market,
animal husbandry	grinding, crushing, husking grain	servants
slaughtering	carrying water from valley	beggary
civil administration	fetching firewood or dung	musician-singer
military	gardening	
religious occupations	spinning cotton thread	
healers	manual labor for church	
scribes, amulet writers	pottery-making (ethnics)	
church painters	restaurateur-prostitute	
weavers	tatooer and hair-dresser	
smiths	mead-brewer(urban)	
leatherwork		
hornwork		
porterage charcoal making		
hunting		
teaching		
judges		

The male occupations have already been described in "material culture"or will be dealt with in relation to their significance in "social organization", sinne they are usually more specialized and more inter-related to other aspects of Amhara culture. This is less true of most female tasks, so that most of them, except for "ethnic" and urban occupations, have been mentioned under "dietery habits"

462 or will be described under "division of labor by sex".

462 The hardest daily work of the female is the pounding
252 and/or grinding of grain. Sorghum(mashella), barley, even shembera peas and pepper, are dehusked by pounding with an up-and-down motion in a hollow wooden tree-trunk, with a stout wooden pestle. After that, the grains are usually left overnight in water for softening. The next day they, as well as the common tyeff grain, are hand-ground on an inclined flat stone, by use of a smaller stone of different type, weighing as much as 4-5 kilos, with the same back-and-forth motion of ancient Egypt, rather than rotary. To produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day.

316 The woman carries water from the valley every morning,
462 sometimes several kilometers, in a heavy earthenware pot
[482] tied to her upper back. It weighs 20 kilos when full. Only during the 3-months rainy season can she use nearby brooks and temporary watercourses. This female task makes it possible to locate hamlets on or near hilltops, far from water in the dry season, but safe from flooding in the rainy season.

462 Kitchen duties of the female, besides cooking and
251 daily baking of "enjara" bread, includes also the processing of meat for later use. After slaughtering, done by men because of the religious significance of this duty from which women are excluded, she cuts the meat into thin strips, called "zelzel", dries them in the sun to leather-like toughness, then stores them in the hut for the next feast, for use in the stew called "zelzel wot". Food -

462 251 processing tasks of the women also include the preparation of staples of the pantry, to be reedy for immediate use when her other taks have left her no time. The red pepper ("bärbärē") is preserved and readied in the form of a paste, by grinding it, adding water and salt, plus a bit of onion. This paste, called "delleh"or "delleha" can then be used in woṭ, or to spice butter to be smeared on "enjära" bread, or mixed with oily nug paste and carried as a condiment and staple on travel. [263] Another prepared spice condiment used by travellers is a dry mixture of spices, salt and "shero" (ground peas), called "meṭen". Butter may be processed by boiling it with pepper, or with the small yellow root of a rhubarb called "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), which is also used as a medicine against tuberculosis.

462 237 572 Fetching and producing materials for fuel is a major female occupation, though left to young girls when available. A special supply of dried cowdung is prepared for the rainy season, beginning right after Easter when the intermittent light rains are expected soon. Donkey and horse manure, "fanday", are not used by the proud Amhhara, but cattle dung is flattened between the palms of women, dried in the sun, piled into tall heaps right next to the hut, then covered with a protective mask of mud and fresh dung. It is also women's task to watch the hearth fire in the evening, to check that it is covered with hot ashes over glowing embers, so that it will not go out and leave the hut chilly, on the one hand, but not burn so brightly that it might set fire to the hut.

373 Little clay oil lamps are a luxury, since the fuel, often kerosene, must be bought at the market. Only churches and landowning farmers can afford it on occasion. In the church, beeswax candles, made by the women auxiliaries of the church from cotton thread and beeswax, serve for illumination at the early masses, and are surprisingly nondripping.

372 Modern matches, made in Ethiopia under a government monopoly, are how cheaply available at all great markets, and have replaced earlier methods of making fim. The old method is still folowed in remote jungle areas such as Wolqait. There, fire is produced by friction, using a big, soft, bottom piece of "wanza" or "gerawa wood", and a branch or piece of hardwood, such as wild olive ("woyra") as the twirling or rubbing top piece. It sometimes takes an hour of effort. Even in the hamlets, where matches are available, they are saved by transporting fire from hearth to hearth in a broken potsherd (gel). Charcoal ("käsäl") is a luxury item, used sparingly only in pottery-making, occasionally to boil coffee if in a hurry or tea in urban places.

462 Baking is a female occupation, but becomes a source
252 of income only in urban centers or temporarily at great
markets, where restorateur-prostitutes engage in this work
or hire less attractive women to do it for them. A woman
who specializes in baking and selling "enjära" and other
462 breads is called a "gagari". It is one of the very few
252 money-producing occupations in which a Coptic Amhara woman
554 can engage. But it is low prestige, and no self-respecting

462 252 [554] pater familias, certainly not a feudal "great man" or official will buy from her, and a lazy housewife, even an urban one, would be sharply criticized, even divorced, if she bought the product of the "gagari". For it is believed that her baking is carelessly done, that sand and dirt have not been picked out carefully before and during grinding, and the product is "fit only for Shanqalla" ex-slaves. One thin, round, two-foot pancake of "enjära" costs 5 Ethiopian cents (US$0.02); dabbo bread of course costs considerably more but customers are less frequent than for the daily "enjära" bread.

283 462 Spinning is the task of the housewife and of all women attached to a household, be it a hamlet kin group, or an all-female zar society (see chapter on spiritual healing). On her wedding day, the bride brings with her a small, ornamented reed basket, called "muday", in which she carries her own personal little distaff, some cotton thread on a reed bobbin that she has made, together with personal [885] ornaments and tattooing dyes. This symbolizes that she is ready for adult womanhood and marriage, though she may be only 13 or 14 years old.

Carding of the raw cotton is also done by women. They beat it, pick out the husks, then place the cotton balls on the string of a bow called "dägan", tense the string with a stick, then agitate the string with the neck cut off a gourd (called "qel angät"). This loosens the cotton so that it can be cleaned and completely dehusked.

Every afternoon the housewife takes up her spinning, unless some special task takes her time. The distaff "enzärt" consists of a round, solid reed or thin round

283 wood about 10 inches long, crowned near the tap end by a
462 round, wooden disk about 1-1/2 inches in diameter. The reed penetrates it through a hole in the center of the disk, and the top of the reed has a small wire hook (called "qwanṭa") attached. The spinner uses this hook to rip out a bit of raw cotton, rapidly twirls the reed in vertical position, pulling thread after thread ("der") from the ball of cotton, and wrapping the thread on the reed below the disk. During this process, the balls of cotton are held in her left palm, the twirling of the distaff is done by her right hand, while the thumb and index finger of the left hand undo knots in the thread and generally straighten it out. The motor habit of this makes it possible to work very rapidly, the thread accumulating on the reed below the disk.

It is now taken off and rolled and connected in two possible ways. Some are rolled directly onto small reed bobbins 3-1/2 inches long, hollow, with outside diameter of 3/8 inches, called "qälam" ("qäsäm" in Shoa province). These are later placed in the shuttle of the weaver for the weft. Cotton for the warp requires firmer consistency and more preparation. After spinning, it is either rerolled onto the sorter end of a partitioned distaff-shaped but much firmer wooden stick that may be as much as 2 feet long and 1/4 inch thick, called "mädawäriya". This rolling is done horizontally, on the upper thigh, in the privacy of the hut, or by an ex-slave Shanqalla servant woman in similar fashion. The other method which may follow this or serve as alternative, is the rolling of the

283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set
on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several s
skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into
long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife
to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of
a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she
has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen
[286] or more togas a year. The cottn thread is now given to
the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may
set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work
near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women
between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few.
The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej byēt", described
under entertainment, usually employs several women as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "ṭäqwari",
304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the
True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany
("Ṭemqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as
restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than
young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the
name indicates ("ṭequrat" means blackening), one of her
jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

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305 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's
304 necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces,
to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

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302 The hairdresser, "ras säri" is a woman who operates a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

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535 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari", musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

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B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. [461] This is based on the attitude of the Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

[281 191] One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

[326 191] On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

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[191] This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

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463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and
magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
323 tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk
"hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good.
For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAläm" of
361 Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted,
most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

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286 converted to Islam by the invading Mahdi in the late 19th century, some of whom never reconverted to Christianity after the end of the invasion. This latter group speaks Amharic, but the Coptic Amhara refuse to call them Amhara. In turn, the Muslims call the Copts "Kaffir", infidels, which is considered an insult. Though socially segregated, Muslim weavers are often called to make shammas in the back yard of a Coptic Amhara house, returning to their own homes at dusk.

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464 In the province of Shoa, and the southern, non-Amhara provinces, the Amhara conquered much land in the late 19th century, acquiring millions of Galla and other "gabbar", sharecropping peasants with a status somewhat resembling that of medieval European serfs. They still constitute an important category of labor, though they can leave the land if they are willing to abandon everything (which they rarely do). During the reign of the present emperor their lot has improved, and it is the Galla who are at present experiencing the most remarkable mobility in occupation of any group in Ethiopia. The numbers affected by the change are small, but the principle of this mobility cannot be exaggerated. Even Menelik II, conqueror of the Galla, had noticed how easily he could win them over to serve under his military banner, partly because of their in-tribal dissention, partly due to their fierce loyalty to any chief to whom they have sworn allegiance. Today a number are in positions of the central government, and many Galla officials and clerks are sent out to the old Amhara provinces, even to Gondar, to govern and administer their erstwhile conquerors

463 563 their erstwhile conquerors.

The majority of the Galla are still primitive, dress in skins, use iron spears since they have few rifles, and are "pagan" or slightly islamized, in provinces south of the Amhara provinces. Their participation in the economy is largely agricultural and pastoral, both honorable occupations in the Amhara view. Their low (though rising) social status is due to their conquest, the African living patterns in their home provinces, the difference in religion and in language, but not to their occupation.

The following crafts fall under the ethnic division of labor:

563 323 462 A. Pottery-making

This occupation can also be classed under Division of Labor by Sex, since only women, mostly Falasha women, engage in it. In the provinces where no Falasha women are available, pottery is made by Gurage or by Galla women. The only time a Coptic Amhara woman prepares a rough utensil she fashions an unsymmetrical container out of mud coarsely mixed with straw or cowdung and left to dry in the sun without firing. Compared with that, the pottery made by women of the other ethnic groups, is indeed "professional".

323 But in fact even the best pottery made by the craftswomen must be considered primitive. It belongs to the category referred to by archeologists in other areas as "women home industry". The firing is of the "first level", i.e. below 600° Centigrade. No potter's wheel is used. Glazing and waterproofing are minimal and primitive; only

323 the beginning of a slip appears.

There are several puzzles in this situation. In ancient Yemen and Hadhramaut, whence much of Abyssinian culture came, pottery was made with a true slip. The potter's wheel was known from ancient times in many parts of Asia and later in much of North Africa, both areas of ancient contact with and influence on Abyssinia. Yet pottery-making even of the craftswomen in Abyssinia has [462] remained African to this day: it is considered an extension of preparation of food and therefore a strictly female occupation. However, one of the most primitive African methods, e.g. of some Nilotic tribes, who shape pottery from a crude lump of mud, is not used by the craftswomen, though the aforementioned Coptic Amhara housewife may use this method, considered unskilled, and therefore not ignoble.

The first step in pottery-making is the selection of different types of raw material. Three types are usually selected and blended in different proportions for the right consistency and, occasionally, color: Red clay "färäfär", often containing iron ochre; sandy, fine clay from soil too poor for farming, "c̣henc̣ha", which is sometimes fired, ground, kneaded with water, dried and broken before use; black soil from fertile topsoil ("lämm") called "walka", often containing graphite. These are kneaded together with gradual additions of water. Next the woman selects a flat round plate of wood or metal to serve as the bottom support, outline and protection from dirt, for the pot about to be made.

323 The method of building up the pot is the spiral-coiling technique (resembling somewhat that of the Choctaw American Indians), strips coiling upward from the botton, as if in imitation of basketry. The woman rolls a thick sausage of the prepared clay between her palms, and presses each tightly, building up the sides of the pot in a spiral. Then she smoothes the sides with a small piece of bamboo, wood, wet corncob, leather rag or sherd of clay. Decorations are by simple incision of lines (if at all), parallel strokes made with a piece of wood or iron spike while the clay is still damp, after burnishing and rubbing has produced a tight and slightly shiny surface. The pottery is then dried in the sun, for 3 days.

The attempt at glazing of some pots, bowls and pitchers to be watertight when used in cooking, sometimes begins even before firing. Such a pot may be burnished with sundried dung, a process called "ṭäräṭṭära", which produces a thick and sticky surface, almost like a slip.

Firing is usually done not more than once a week. In preparation, some of the larger and deeper pots, where the sun does not penetrate well enough, may be pre-heated with hot charcoal ("käsäl"), placed inside the jar. Then all pottery is washed, dried again, and leaned neck on neck. After the big beer jars, the next biggest bowls, "daka", (used for fermenting ṭyēff flour in water) are stacked around them, then the cooking pots "dass"(for "woṭ" stew) which are smaller, and pitchers and drinking cups, if the space is not needed for the larger water-carrying pots. There are usually no more than 4 of the

323 largest, thigh-high beer jars included in one such heap of pottery to be fired, but a dozen smaller pots may be included. Dry cowdung and branches of hardwood are stuffed in between the pottery and all around. Wind direction and strength is calculated from experience and observation, and when deemed right, the heap is fired. Sometimes the firing lasts only 1 to 2 hours, sometimes longer.

The finished product may be burnished smooth, in case of cooking pots, with the necklace of imported blue glass rings called "doqa". There are several methods of waterproofing pottery ("mamuashät"). The pot may be reheated on the hearth for 1/2 hour, then placed on the ground and cold milk quickly poured in and swished around for several minutes until the pot is cold. The milk is then thrown away. The silicon that has adhered to the heated cooking pot thus provides a partial, interior glazing. This glazing by animal product is considered better, by the craftswoman, than vegetable glaze. The latter is done by using yeast ("ṭeffin") on a heated pot in place of milk. The large baking plate for enjara, the "megogo", is burnished with the caked remains of crushed nug-seed after the oil has been pressed out, the mass of compressed seed referred to as "yäqebye ar" (lit. excrement of butter). Before actual use, the megogo is further rubbed, this time by the housewife, with leaves of the "ketketa" bush (Dodonea viscosa).

Another method of the craftswomen is to paint on the resinous juice of the euphorbia (Euphorbia candelabrum tree), but this is done only at lower elevations.

323 The result of all of these methods is not a true glaze, rather a dull one of only partial efficiency.

It is interesting that these attempts at glazing are also used on tightly woven reed baskets, "qwac̣ha", waterproofed with "wägämit", skimmed milk, then smoked with "abalo" wood, or the odoroferous "maṭänya" wood. This smoking out is also done to pottery, not only cooking pots but also the beer storage jars, "gan", and the waterpot, "madiga", though the wood used is "wanza". But this smoking out is the work of the housewife, not the craftswoman, for the purpose is to kill the sour smell rather than to aid the glazing. Amhara housewives do not glaze any pottery.

When a pot breaks it is no great calamity, for the pieces are ground up and mixed with raw clay in kneading to give the next pot a greater chance. The life of a pot may range from 2 weeks to 5 years, in the opinion of the craftswomen, who admit that no one can predict the life of a pot even in ordinary usage.

Two craftswomen usually work as a team. One, usually the younger, stronger but less experienced kneads the clay in a squatting position, while the older woman squats in the sun building up the pot or stands bent over, burnishing it. A big beer jar, the work of 2 days prior to firing, brings from 50 Ethiopian cents to Eth$1.-, depending on locality. The lesser price is more common in trade between hamlets that have long-established trade connections, while the higher price is common at big markets. The same price applies to 3 to 4 smaller pots.

Pottery is made during the entire dry season, from the months of Teq̣emt to Senye, interrupted only by the

323 harvest in the first month. Cash income from this occupation in the case of a diligent craftswoman can amount to Eth$50.-per year, which means at least 50 large beer jugs or at least 150 smaller kitchen pottery. Such a craftswoman is called "antäränya" or the general term for craftsman, "kayla" (which, however, is often considered an insult). She may be freed from other labors, particularly spinning, in her own household. But in general she considers it a sideline, for some cash income, or to please the landlord by supplying his household and tenants with pottery at very low prices.

323 443 Most Falasha craftswomen do not like to sell on the big market, despite the much better prices there. The reason they give is that they may face insults during the usual dickering that precedes purchase, and also that they do not wish to arouse the envy of their Coptic Amhara neighbors by accumulating wealth. Another reason is that the big markets take place invariably on Saturday, on which day the Sabbath-observing Falashas cannot go to market or trade, and the Muslim middleman would absorb the extra profit that comes from trading at the market. However, Falasha men do follow the latter alternative with their plowpoints.

323 This disinterest of Falasha craftswomen in developing their economic potentials has led to conservatism in regard to modern change. Though very curious about European pottery brought in the Italian occupation, particularly about shape and glazing, they did not adopt European methods, partly because of technical limitation of power and fuel as well as techniques, partly for the

323 aforementioned social reasons. They can bake fired bricks, "shehla", but have no use or orders for them, and do not make them at present. [341] They apply their artistic talents to a tower-like crown, "gulelat", which they place on the top of the thatched roof of the Falasha synagogue, the "mesgid" (which has also the practical effect of preventing the penetration of water during the rain storms).

415 The vast majority of clay utensils produced by the craftswoman is used in the household. Many of them are small, not over 12 inches in diameter or height. Round forms predominate, especially spherical or semi-spherical bowls with a long or short neck. Nearly all have two handles on the side, for grasping and for pulling a rope through.

The simple baking plate for the daily enjara bread, the "megogo", in town called "meṭed", has already been mentioned. [359] Placed on the hearth of three stones, it forms a simple stove, and itself is topped by a somewhat conical ("moged") lid which fits snugly. 20" in diameter, 1-1/2" high, 1" thick, grain is also roasted on it.

There are numerous varieties of water pitchers, mostly pear-shaped, with long, stout necks. When full (about 15 liters), the Amhara women carry them on the back, and therefore a special loop is added by the craftswoman on the base of the neck, so that the rope can be drawn through it and around the chest, for added support. The most common, big water-pitcher of this kind is the "madiga", with a height of 20" of which 5" are spout, 14" at its greatest width, and a 5" width of the spout. It is

It is used for the last stage in beer making, when the talla and fresh gesho are mixed with water. It was also used in many such annual transactions to avoid arguing and litigation.

A smaller version which is more often used as a water pitcher is the"mänqäl", only 14" high of which 4" are spout, 10" diameter at the widest, 7" bottom diameter, and a spout width of 4". It usually contains 6 - 10 liters of water. The "mänqäl" is also used to store smaller quantities of mead("ṭej").

For final preparation and short-time storage of barley beer (ṭälla), on feast occasions rather than for daily use, a huge jar called "gan" is used, with a capacity of about 150 liters. Several men are needed to tilt it so that beer can be poured into the smaller madiga. The shape is more like an amphora, with two side handles and almost round bottom. It can also be used to store grain. For safety's sake, the bottom half may be buried in the soil. In Amhara terms, the average "gan" holds more than 100 "berellé" (glass bottles used as mead cups). The spout may be 9" wide, 6" long. Two "gan" are usually sufficient for the average country feast or "tazkar", unless it continues for more than a full day. A "gan" with a shorter spout is called "masäro". Special straps are used for inclining it, called "maweräja" or "mangächa".

Cooking pots and bowls are usually small. The "wachet", a small variety, is preferred in urban areas. It is about 13" in diameter but only 3" high, with a thickness of 3/4" to 1". It is covered with a straw lid. Rural

415 housewives prefer a much larger variety, "mägäfäl", for the family "woṭ", or, for small-scale cooking the common "dest", or "mamwashät". This is 4-1/2" high, sometimes with two vertically separated compartments for different foods, e.g. peppery meat stew and vegetables. It is usually the blackest in color of all pots. A similar small pot, "mäc̣hit" is used for cooking fish.

The traditional coffeepot, called "kuskus" or "kuskushet" (onomatopoetic), is shaped like a madiga, but less than half its size, and has a short and narrower spout. Another pitcher does resemble a European bowl-coffee pot in shape, with a long, bent, narrow spout. This is the one-handled "manqurqoriya" (onomatopoetic), called "jäbäna" in Shoa and "gämbo" in Cushitic, used to pour barley beer into individual cups, holding at most 15 berelle. This pouring was the special occupation of servants called "gämbonya" in elaborate feudal households, and he did nothing else but carry the "gambo" or barley beer on military expeditions with his master. This special occupation has recently fallen into disuse but is well remembered by the nostalgic.

B. Smithing

326 Of all specialized, manual occupations, smithcraft involves the largest team, five able bodied men who, however, can interchange their roles. A team of five is necessary because of the greater use of musclepower and greater need for cooperation is this occupation. But, apart from the former specialist in weapon-making, the technological

achievement even of the smith remains comparatively primitive and not only is there no further sub-specialization, but the smith also does whatever carpentry is tangential to his occupation.

The following roles are involved:

2 men to hold the piece of hot iron ("berät") with iron tongs ("fächäl"),

1 man to hammer the iron into shape with a heavy iron hammer,

1 man to operate the twin bellows of goatskin ("wänaf"), one hand moving away from the fire and the other going down,

1 man to coordinate, supervise, and relieve one of the others if he tires, so that the operation is not interrupted.

In some parts of Ethiopia where iron ores occur, the ore was smelted and resmelted to a slaky, spongy, carbon-poor raw material that must be hammered and heated many times before use. This has become rarer until today all the iron used by ironsmiths is scrap, formerly imported from Eritrea and the Sudan, but now available in large quantities where Italian military and civilian machinery remained behind and is being used. Even the anvil, formerly a flat rock, is now often an iron European one, as are the heavy hammers, tongs, etc. Only the bellows is still traditional. It is of the hose type, consisting of a complete goatskin tied up at head and 3 legs, with a lengthy slit on 1 rear quarter (or the legs are tied up and the slit used at neck). When the bellows is extended, air enters into the spread slit. This is closed by hand

326 during the downward stroke, the compression, when the air is pressed through the built-in pipe(or a horn inserted in the neck) into the nozzle to the fire at the other end. There are two such bellows in the operation, one being extended while the other is being compressed with the other hand.

412 Agricultural tools are the major products of the smith. Sickles ("mac̣hed") resemble European ones but are smaller and not curved as far. They are teethed somewhat roughly. In case of thick, wooden stalks such as mashella (sorghum) maize and other tall stalks, the sickle is used at the bottom, while other grains, whose stalks are more useful for thatching, etc. are cut at the top just beneath the ear. To cut branches off trees, etc., a billhock, machete-type ("gajam") hacking knife is used, which resembles an oversize sickle but has no teeth.

A big axe ("fas") is used to cut trees, but a more common, smaller hatchet, "mätrӓbiya", is used to cut deadwood for fuel and other uses. When this grows dull, the owner takes it to the smith who cuts it down and makes an adze of it, after seeking a properly-shaped, angle-formed wooden handle with a knoll at the elbow, to fit the iron adze-blade into. This adze is much used in digging, scraping, hoeing and harrowing the soil after seeding.

The smith also makes the sharp iron point for the digging stick used on steep slopes, especially on the "dega" upland where terrace farming is impractical, or to help break up new or long-fallow soil, using the digging stick as a lever. It is called "ankasē" or "doma". On

412 lower, muddy terrain, e.g. in the Läzäga district of the Wolkait jungle border, digging sticks are used to prepare small holes for mashella seed. But the Amhara peasant prefers to use the plow, even on contours of hills, since the use of the stick is hard labor, requiring several men working in unison. Often the stick must be weighed down with heavy rocks against the sun-baked soil in the dry season.

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407 The scratch plow probably evolved as an elaboration of the digging stick by fixing it at an angle to a long beam pulled forward by the yoke of two oxen, thus substituting animal muscle power for human energy. Among the Amhara, the bottom tip of the plowpoint is almost always strengthened and protected by an iron plowpoint purchased from an ethnic (Falasha) smith. The sharp angle biting into the soil can be adjusted by means of a suspension binding strap of hippopotamus skin, and two small wedges. The farmer merely has to guide the digging-stick part of the plow, and encourage the oxen with his long fiber whip.

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303 Knives for kitchen use very in length usually from 8 to 12 inches, are curved, with the cutting edge on the curved side which comes to a point. The blade is set in a wooden handle. These knives are also used for circumcision. The old razor blade usually was of similar shape, about 6 inches long, and used primarily for shaping head head hair. It is now replaced by imported European blades. Pincers, 4-5 inches long, are carried on trips to remove [515] thorns from the bare feet. Little ear spoons are suspended from the neck-cord and used to remove earwax, especially by the ladies.

412 ly by the ladies. An awl ("wäsfē") is used in basket-making and umbrella-weaving. A small chisel ("mesar") may be a more recent introduction, but, like the awl and larger items, is nonetheless made by the (Falasha) smith. [332] Burning irons for burning out sores on the backs of mules and donkeys are also made by the ironsmith.

326 The ironsmith, usually Falasha in ethnic identification, does not usually do silversmithing. This is done in urban areas or big markets usually by Muslim silversmiths. The silver is smithed from Maria Theresa thalers, and the smith may keep as much as 2/3 of the "raw material" for himself. As in the case of most other marketable tools and utensils, the product of the silversmith is made on order only, though increasingly there are traders with chests full of silver filigree earspoons, crosses, rings, etc., ready for sale to officials, travellers, and others with ready cash. In the past, silversmiths using imported coins, and goldsmiths using Ethiopian mined gold nuggets, were to found primarily attached to the tent city of the king at his capital. Casting is done on the principle of cire perdue, a form of wax in clay.

441 Weapons were made also in connection with the feudal military organization, which required the craftsman to follow wherever the armed bands of the warlords went in raids or new settlements, serving as a kind or ordinance, and always on call. Rifles in Abyssinia date back over 300 years, handed down as family property, the stocks replaced time and again with tough, white wood, "wanza" (Cordia abyssinica). Each soldier carried gunpowder in

411 a cow's horn and had to manufacture his own cartridges. European cartridges, since the late 19th century have become prized items and are traded, though not illegally, at all big markets, sometimes in lieu of cash. However during all this time, until the present decade, spears were the primary weapons, for rifles were in short supply, out of date, and often in poor condition. The Galla and other south Ethiopians still use the spear almost exclusively.

Among the Amhara, as in most of Africa, the spear ("ṭor") rather than the also available saber or sword symbolized warfare ("ṭornät"). It still is kept, as a festive ornament and as a symbol of individual liberty and manly courage. There were numerous types and sizes, blades ranging most often from 12 to 20 inches, some lances used for throwing, some as hand spears, some two-pronged. Some were used in battle as late as the Italian invasion in 1935/6.

The saber was considered much less significant. It was curved toward the blade like an oversized kitchen knife, and fitted snugly into a scabbard. The main defensive protection was the round shield of rhinocerous or buffalo hide. It was not very large, 18 to 24 inches in diameter, height of curvature about 8 inches. It was often richly decorated with metal, silver, and even gold in case of the highest ranks. Daggers ("c̣hubbē") were curved among the Amhara, but straight among other groups, for daggers, too, were regarded by the Amhara merely as adaptations of the kitchen knife.

411 A safer version of the throwing spear, with dull or no point, is used by the young men during their mock battle and chase at the "gänna" feast (Christmas).

326 435 The economic aspects of smithcraft could provide the smith with considerable income, since the Amhara peasants are in regular need, and since the Falasha smiths have a monopoly due to the suspicions of the magic correlation which keep Amhara from the craft. But in fact the income is not large. A team of rural smiths, 5 men, receive only Eth$1.50 for their labor in making a plowpoint, if the customer brings his own scrap, double that if the smiths have to supply it. The somewhat bigger "summer plow" costs somewhat more. The customer usually waits in a special hut of the hamlet of the smiths, and must be provided with grain and other necessities, meanwhile. Thus, while an individual smith may earn as much as Eth$400.- from his craft in a year, the additional food bill may be Eth$300.-, and most of the earnings will go to pay the rent on his land, of which he farms less than the average peasant.

Even a well-made plowpoint dulls after about 10 years. Then it is brought back and the smith cuts it down to an axe ("mäteräbiya") for only 50¢ Eth. When that dulls, he cuts it down further to a slightly smaller adze ("mäqofäriya") for half that sum.

326 563 The human organization of smithcraft, particularly in the Amhara area where the Falasha are the smiths, presents peculiar problems and patterns. Where no Falasha hamlets are near, the smithing is done by itinerant Fa-

326 lasha smiths, whose women make pottery at the same time.
563 This arrangement is not liked by the Falasha because of
their religious obligations, even though they reside in
a special guest hut, slaughter their own sheep and use
their own utensils while at work for a distant Amhara ham-
[783] let. For they rest on Saturday, work on Sunday, and the
more traditional among them have to undergo elaborate
purification ceremonies upon their return home.

This alternate, itinerant pattern probably developed during recent centuries when feudal warlords forced them to accompany their troops as ordnance, at any time, often during their entire lifetimes. This continued as late as the 1920's, when Ras Gugsa still ruled the province of Begemdir (Gondar). Since Menelik's conquest of distant Galla lands, in the late 19th century, Falasha smiths have been carried off farther than ever, and sometimes never again seen by their families. Ras Gugsa wanted to please Menelik in his Amharization program in the south, and ordered Coptic churches built by the Falashas in "pagan" or Muslim Galla areas, when their wartime duties were largely over. Some were given Shanqalla females to replace their own distant families. A few rose to the position of "bäjirond" (treasurer) and were given land property in lieu of salary. Thus an exception was made for these individuals, for Falashas were not permitted to purchase land, on condition that their offspring carry on the same services in the feudal armies. Now that these services have been abrogated, there are still a few landholding Falasha families, the descendants of army-ordnance Falasha smiths.

326 Another difficulty is that the Falasha, observing
563 Sabbath on Saturday when the big markets are in operation,
[443] cannot market any surplus of iron products directly, even if they wanted to, and must use a middleman, usually a Muslim, who absorbs any extra profit that might accrue in town. Thus the economic significance of their craft remains entirely in the old pattern, and is not developing in a modern direction, which it might have as a result of recent Western contact, stimulation and tools. The Falasha are recasting every part of their own rifles except the barrel, and their womenfolk have attempted to make glass out of sand (with little success) and modern Yemenite clay incense burners (with more success).

C. Carpentry.

322 Carpentry has already been characterized as minimal, incidental, merely semi-occupational among the Amhara, and as a tangential task of the ironsmith toolmaker. At best, the carpenter ("ṭärabi") is a part-time specialist.

The riflestock, of wanza wood, made by the ironsmith, often leads to his being asked to do other special woodwork, e.g. saddlemaking. If he becomes proficient in it, he may do nothing else during part of the year, and then send the finished, wooden saddle to the faqi tanners for a leather cover. For his own labor he may charge as much as Eth$8.- a better profit than that achieved by the average ironsmith. Wanza wood (Cordia abyssinica) is also used for the legs of the "alga" bed, so that the

322 saddlemaker is usually an expert at lumbering. A well-made "korecha", wooden, skin-covered saddle, with adornements, made to order, may cost a total of Eth$25.-

D. Tanning

281 The consumption of leather articles among the Amhara is tremendous for a settled agricultural people. It is reminiscent of Hamitic-speaking tribes whose ecology is based on animal husbandry, and the technology of tanning and manufacture of leather articles is linked with that of North Africa. The ethnic group that does this specialized work in Amhara territory, the Faqi, were Cushitic (Hamitic) - speaking, and probably constitute an early group in residence in Ethiopia. Products consumed include cooking utensils especially for travelling, riding equipment, scabbards, shields, and formerly skin clothing (now worn only by itinerant monks).

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797 The Faqi live in scattered hamlets of their own, the size of which is usually like the smaller Amhara ones: patrilocal residence, 5 to 6 huts at most, each occupied by a biological family. Until very recently, none of them were Coptic Christians since the Coptic priesthood considered these "pagans" on the same level as occupational hunters, too low to be "raised to Christianity". They spoke old-Cushitic languages such as Qemant and other Agau tongues, and gathered in remote tree-groves on top of hills for occasional religous worship similar to that of the "pagan" Galla. Now most of them speak or at least understand Amharic, and since 1942 some have become con-

281 verted to Christianity due to the influence of the Emperor's 563 wishes. Socially they are now considered on a level above [797] the hunters, and, after adopting Christianity almost on a level with other non-ethnic craftsmen. Though largely endogamous within their own Faqi class, they used to take half-Shanqalla wives, or "woyto" (hippopotamus hunters), but near urban places such as Gondar they now marry poor Amhara of doubtful ancestry, after having become Christians. They are still considered "rustic" by the Amhara townsmen, since the Faqi, like the Falasha, do not like to live in town, to avoid negative human relations and insults based on their occupation ("You Faqi").

The Faqi do not like to be called by that name and prefer the term "arabannya", which has a connotation of someone skilled in something imported, of prestigeful origin. This is perhaps well-founded for some of their finer products resemble morocco leather.

The Faqi farm little, less than the Falasha, but keep kitchen gardens. They usually do not own land- unless a family acquired some as a reward for ordnance services rendered accompanying the troops of Menelik II. The cash obtained from their products goes largely to pay rent [231] for the land, similar to the Falasha. The Faqi try to keep as much cattle as they can afford, for the skins are valuable to them, and cow's urine is used in the process of tanning.

The basic team need not exceed three ablebodied, experienced tanners, but there are numerous little jobs for boys and older men.

The raw material, sometimes bought from the place of slaughtering, sometimes brought by the customer, consists largely of skins of cattle, goats and sheep. Goat and sheepskin are worked to finely tanned leather often of reddish color and are used for ornaments, or covers for food baskets and other utensils. Cow or ox skins are used to make rougher leather such as saddlecovers, household utensils, or simply covers for nighttime sleeping. Skins of horses, mules and the multitude of cheaply available donkeys,are not used.

Of wild animals, skins of buffalo (Bos caffer aequinoctialis) and of rhinoceros (Rhinoceros africanus) were used to make shields while antelope skin is still tanned in a fashion similar to that of goats. Skins of oxen and cows are often simply dried in the sun and sold on the market, Thence much of it is exported to foreign countries and made into cheap shoesoles. This method is also followed with crocodile skins, leopard skins and the skins of the Colobus ("gureza") monkey. For simple sun drying, skins are scraped on the inside with knives to remove all remnants of flesh and ligaments, then stretched tight in the sun. The fibers in the skin become glued together to a strong, hard surface. This method is followed by the rural Amhara householder, the hunter who has no skill or experience in tanning.

The Faqi tanner follows two major methods, sometimes both, in the preparation of a skin for specific products: The producing of chamois-type skin by means largely of fats, a method widespread in inner Africa; and tanning by means of tannin-containing plants, a method known in Asia and

281 Egypt since ancient times. Dyeing usually red, by means of native plants, accompanies the tanning process, for any good skin that is to be further manufactured.

Depilation is achieved by exposing the skin to a carefully controlled "sweating" process of natural putrefaction. A cowskin ~~is~~ soaked in water for 3 days, then dried and soaked in cow's urine for 3 days. The hair is thus loosened, the skin softened, so that it responds to easy depilation by rubbing with astringent plants:

[824] "embwac̣ho" - (Solanum margitanum)

"embway" - (Rumex alismafolius), a thistle, the crushed yellow fruit of which also acts as a preservative for the skin, since it contains tannin.

Then the skin is stretched tight on wooden pegs, to dry in the sun for one day. It is then rubbed with a stone for one day, which removes the last remaining hair except for a hairline or raised skin which is purposely left to indicate the pattern for the cutting that will take place later. The skin is then rubbed for one day with lemon (which is commonly available) for a pickling effect.

It is now ready for dyeing. Sometimes, especially in the case of smaller (e.g. goat) skins, the dye is first prepared by boiling the plants in clay pots (the bark of the "qeratē" or other bush, or "enqoy" seed mixed with lemon juice), and then soaking and drying the skin several times after the dye has cooled. Cowskins are more often dyed by leaving them stretched and rubbing with the bark of the "beshesha" tree or leaves of the "qärät" (or "qeratē") bush, for one day.

281 Fats, usually of plant origin, either wild or domestic, are then used to lubricate and soften the skin. This is hard manual work, lasting sometimes several days. Most commonly preferred is the castor oil bean, called "qaçhma" or "gulqwas". The skin may now be kneaded or stamped by feet, to work the fats in and render the skin soft for the cutting and fashioning of objects, which now follows.

282
411 The shield was formerly one of the major products of the Faqi, but now is made rarely and only for ornamental use. The rhinoceros or buffalo skin is cut circular, placed over a wooden stake in the ground, the rim pegged down, to prepare the cupola shape. The skin is then depilated, dried, smeared with oils to expand again. It is beaten to increase its resistance. Incised decorations and the pulling through of the leather handle, are done before the shield is entirely hard and dry. Metal decor is added later, by the smith, after the Faqi has delivered his product.

282 More common products, still made today, are: half-sack, "ənqälba", for carrying the baby on the mother's [354] back, with straps and a bottom tied to the mother's shoul- [415] ders, chest and waist; full sacks, "aqomda", for transporting grain to market, tied with strips (these are also used for various storage in the better Amhara huts); [233] straps cut of poor skins in all kinds and sizes, "qeralla", some for tying loads onto donkeys, some to serve as more springy diagonal straps of the better "alga" bed; a fine, tanned cowskin used as blanket; "jëndi", cover

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under
[291] the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dābälo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qārbäta") on travel, or to store butter in.
[212] The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("beranna") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a red, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.

[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walking stick, on which it gradually dries fast.
[534] Drums for use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

282 aforementioned foodbasket for travel (the "agelgel"). Drinking horns and cups of "great men" (feudal lords) and landholding Amhara peasants are sometimes similarly covered by ornamental skins.

282 The saddle, "korec̣ha", is still an important product
492 of the Faqi, after the carpenter-smith has prepared its
wooden basis. It has a high front pummel of wood, and a
high wooden backrest, both held together by the saddle-
tree of two wooden planks at a wide angle to each other.
This is covered by the Faqi with a very thick, strong,
parchment-like cowskin, sewn carefully and tightly through
holes drilled in the wood, and ornamented with line de-
[386] signs, often after dying the skin black with soot obtain-
ed from the "qänṭäṭef" creeper vine.

Saddlemaking, like shield-making, caused much displacement of the Faqi during the long periods of warring chieftains and their armies. The great pride of an Amhara horseman was to have well-made and ornamented leather equipment for his horse, on its head, chest and back. Here the tanner often had to work in close cooperation with the smith. The iron ring of the stirrup (still in use); ornamental metal discs; the iron mouth pieces which resemble the Arab type and press tongue to mandible so that the horse reacts painfully to the slightest direction of the little finger, were common and still are in many districts. Gold or silver ornaments for the horse were important decorations for bravery given by the king especially to officers of high Amhara nobility. They are still honored as family heirlooms.

E. Weaving

286 Most weaving is of cotton (Gossypium arboreum), grown in the lowlands of Ethiopia. It is of shorter staple but stronger than the Egyptian, imported from the Sudan.

286 Weaving is man's work, and in Amhara territory is an
563 "ethnic occupation" carried out either by Falashas or by
[142] Muslim Ethiopians. Emperor Menelik II tried to change this by encouraging Amhara men to take part in this basic and increasingly necessary activity, not only for the traditional shamma, but also for the spreading use of "qämīs" shirt and jodphur trousers. But he had little success with it. Only very poor, "detribalized" Amhara (who have intermarried with socially lower ethnic groups) weave shamma togas, and cotton sheeting imports have increased steadily since Menelik II for other garments. One can therefore state that weaving remains an ethnic occupation.

286 There are two basic types of materials for shammas woven on the traditional handloom The more prevalent is the peasant-type, thick, warm, soft, tight-knit and sturdy, heavy material, that will last long; the other is thinly woven, almost like a muslin, and is preferred in towns, especially by the women who use it like a long shawl above a long dress. The latter type is more richly embroidered at the narrow borders.

When the housewife has cleaned, carded, spun and rolled the cotton thread for the warp on a warping reel, 286 and the thread for the woof is rolled on reed bobbins, the weaver is called, if he does not insist at doing the work in his own courtyard (on which the rural Falashas particularly usually insist). He brings the portable comb "mämcha", which consists largely of fairly light hardwood bars with neat rows of thin reeds, "ters" (lit. teeth) fixed horizontally between them; also the heddling arrangement which consists of a few neat sticks and cords, and the small canoe-shaped shuttle, "mäwärwärya" made of smooth hardwood and pierced by a hole through which the cotton thread from the bobbin inside the shuttle can later be drawn during wefting. This is the basic, personal equipment of the weaver, referred to as "shamani eqa".

At his place of work, a horizontal beam and bar are set up on sturdy stakes, high enough so that they will be above his head when he is in sitting position. A hole, "masraya", is dug so that he can place his feet from the knees down in it and yet have another foot of leeway at bottom. This is important for the heddling arrangement, the device of raising and lowering alternate strands during wefting by means of a treadle which consists simply of strings attached to the big toes, so that each foot moving up and down creates a shed and countershed, up above.

The fixed part of the loom is set up on stakes about 2 yards from each other, the horizontal bar about 2-1/2 yards high. The portable comb is about 1-1/2 yards long and is suspended by 2 ropes about 1-1/4 yards long from the top, so that it hangs about 20 inches above ground and can be operated comfortably. The shuttle is about 8 inches long, canoe-shaped, with its inside carved out to interior length of 5-1/2 inches, 1-1/4 inches inside width, and by means of a lengthwide strong reed a bobbin 2-1/2 inches long is suspended within it.

The loom mounting now takes place. The warp is stretched lengthwise in front of, over and behind the weaver, hitched firmly to a wooden post in front of him ("yäfit gend"), after being laid out over a horizontal beam on top and in front of him so that on that beam the warp is laid out, bothllengthwise and parallel. Usually there are 8 packthreads ("mäzärazär").

The operation consists principally of putting the waft between the warp as quickly as possible by throwing the shuttle across horizontally from one hand into the other, through the passageway("wärräwärrä"), which constitutes the picking part of the wefting. At the same time he operates the warp or comb by means of a long, arched stick of hardwood ("mäwäṭäriya") to smooth the edges of the material and prevent puckering by stretching it. From time to time he lets on and takes off, by unknotting and loosening the bundle of thread and retightening (this may be done by his junior assistent-apprentice). When finished, the weaver carefully knots the ends together, and sews the lengthwise ends of the shamma ("mäsad") by hand with a strong thread, now often an imported one.

286 An experienced weaver can throw the shuttle as quickly as every 1/2 second, which would mean 120 picks a minute. It is a one-man operation, and the junior helper is employed primarily to carry the portable comb hand bobbins and make fastenings as indicated. An average, simple shamma takes about two days of work, but cases have been known when an experienced weaver in the prime of life, working uninterruptedly for 12 hours from sunrise to sunset, without rest and withour mishap, did it in one day, because of the pressure of an approaching marriage. The marriage months following the harvest are the busy season, ending at the approach of the light rains. Often a weaver takes 3 days for an average shamma, with long rests during the work day; a "kutta" toga may well take a week.

Weavers usually work by special order only and do not store any products for more advantageous sale, for the "season". They are craftsmen, not traders, particularly the Falashas, and they employ no middleman. Thus the transaction is on the interpersonal level. This is even true in the provincial towns. Only in Addis Ababa can a market section be found where traders store and sell readymade shammas, but nearly always they are of the muslin, cheesecloth-type variety, with a selection of colorfully embroidered, narrow borders.

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386
439 Traditional dying is rarely of the cloth, but mostly of threads which are then used in embroidery. In the past many of these red and blue dyes were imported from the coast, from India, or colored threads

286 pulled from imported cloth. Now most of these dyes are
386 imported from Europe, and many are colorfast only in
[439] cold water (which causes little difficulty as most washing is in cold water). Such embroidery must be paid for extra, but the simple, narrow, single-colored border of the shamma, of the rural type, is included in the price.

286 For such a peasant shamma, the weaver receives
434 from Eth$5 to 8.- depending on whether or not the customer supplied all the prepared cotton. An average, experienced weaver can usually get enough orders to earn about Eth$200.- per year, in the rural area. If he does no farming other than gardening, his food cost may be Eth$140.- per annum. The average weaver is left with more cash than the farmer, who rarely has more than Eth$30.- left in cash at the end of the year. More often the weaver also farms, since his "season" does not conflict with the major active farming season. A hardworking weaver of solid reputation has the opportunity to accumulate comparativewealth, at least theoretically, but since most rural ethnic specialists, including the Falashas, are not much concerned with commercial profit, few do. It occurs more often among Muslim town weavers.

286 The social position of the weaver, apart from his
554 ethno-religious affiliation, gives him a high place among working specialists, almost equal to that of the musician (if it were not for the fact that the weaver is usually non-Coptic). He is above the status of a smith, and there is no suspicion of black magic attached to the

286 554 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 563 The present division of labor is still based on the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary labor, [465] for which specified wages based on *Time* and *Energy* are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 [566] The first category arises out of the obligations owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

466 house, a church, a simple bridge, help in harvest, make charcoal and gather incense for the church, conduct pack animals on military expeditions, function as guard or sacristan, Amhara labor thus includes the agricultural worker of many semi-skills, who usually hires on in March when the little rains launch the plowing season, and who must furnish a "wās", a personal guarantor who will be responsible for the employee's conduct, and agree on time, energy to be expended and wages to be received.

465 At present the wage is about Eth$30.- per month for full-time labor, 6 days a week, sunrise to sunset (12 hours, less about 3-5 hours rest); plus free food (usually simple) and a place to sleep inside a hut or temporary shelter; clothing is at the employee's expense. Important church holidays are observed, and leave is usually granted to take care of personal affairs, in the case of an Amhara -Coptic employee. The master may not beat or haze the employee, on penalty of a fine levied by the "cheqa shum".

464 Thus, even the poor Amhara laborer retains his pride, but causes the employer to look for labor among socially lower ethnic groups or even Shanqalla ex-slaves who have remained, largely in Amhara territory after liberation. The employer pays these less, works them more, even on church holidays since many of them are still non-Christian. In proud Begemdir (Gondar) province, where no Galla or Gurage ethnics are available for labor (as they are in Shoa), unskilled labor is a

464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

566 466 701 The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 797 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale

567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

567 then a slave had no legal personality and his matter was responsible for any damages or crimes he might commit.

Though it was illegal, no one interfered with a master who killed his non-Christian slave. The offspring of an Amhara father and slave mother had full legitimacy and rights of inheritance, but the child of a free woman and a male slave--a rarity--remained a slave and belonged to whoever had rights over her, i.e. her husband, or her parents if whe was unmarried. In the province of Godjam a slave could own his own skins, till allocated field of his own in own spare time, and trade his grain on the market, so that he resembled a serf of medieval Europe, but belonged to his master, not to the soil

164
567 Much of the labor available today in the rural Amhara provinces, especially Begemder, is of Shanqalla or semi-Shanqalla and half-Barya origin (ie. with an Amhara father and ex-slave mother). There are many of these half-negroids because of generations of concubinage, and because of the simplicity of the ecological life of the Amhara which can be regarded as a levelling factor, and good harvests or wartime famines were almost equally enjoyed or suffered by master as well as slave. Free Amhara peasant women and slave women did the same type of work, even crushed barley together at the same time in the same hollow treetrunk (a frequent scene in paintings). Liberation, in the past, of individual slaves, was rare, for not only was it a loss to the master equal to 3 pairs of oxen, or 2to3 good huts, or

464 567 an entire harvest, but the slave would suddenly find himself without a protector, without food and shelter, separated from his own (Shanqalla) people since birth and not knowing their language or their customs.

When liberation was decreed by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1941/2, many ex-slaves remained with their old masters or attached themselves as retainers to a new one, to have a basic livelihood and protection in court against hurt or insult from strangers. The fact that slave trading had been forbidden by Haile Selassie since 1924, and been gradually enforced since then, had increased the personal attachment of slaves not only to the master but to his entire extended family from which they could no longer be sold. After 1942, those ex-slaves who did leave their former masters often settled in makeshift shacks in towns, usually in the section formerly assigned to Muslims, and they now constitute an important potential labor supply in the towns.

463 464 The second category[1] includes semi-specializations of some poorer Coptic Amhara who, in addition to some farming, do such work as making charcoal ("kâsäl" or "dengay kâsäl"), as soon as the major harvest is over. They then move in small teams, usually kinfolk, into the drying river valleys where suitable wood is more plentiful, and later sell their product in towns, to restaurateurs, on the big and little markets, or to smiths and potters. Since this trade is "one that anyone can learn", non-occult, there is nothing slavish about it to the mind of the Amhara, and the loss of

[1] [of part time labor (see p.215, cat. 116).-Analyst]

463 464 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 [324] Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashioning the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 554] Some heads of farming families are adept at "talking well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "ṭäbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

[231] A large number of semi-specialists fall into the category of caretakers, "ṭäbaqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 265 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

463 265 once a noble profession, requiring much intelligence and training, but now a handsome cash gift, partly for the wedded couple and partly as a tip, can introduce a non-prestigeful guest to the table of the nobles. The profession has thus dropped to the level of the itinerant musician, the "azmari", and brings neither prestige nor any particular shame.

463 532 A still honorable semi-specialization is that of the painter of religious or religious-royal themes in the church, the "seel-sali". He is often a layman loosely attached to the church, who learned his craft while attending church school and then apprenticed himself to a master painter. He is often hired by an individial landlord or well-to-do, often aging, pious Amhara man or noble lady, who wish to make this gift to the church and often order the painter to paint in a small, modest likeness of themselves or their recently departed parents. (See section of art).

464 The third category of "damoz"[1] labor is traditionally found in the rural areas primarily in the case of the temporary marriage. The availability of ex-slaves rarely makes it necessary to hire on any but temporary agricultural labor, for it would be too expensive and difficult to hire Amhara labor. There is, however, a type of day laborer, "mwayatänya", or simply "seratänya" (worker), who is now paid about Eth$1.- a day, and can be hired for some temporary job without the other involvements sich as leave for church holidays and kin-visiting. A poor Amhara will sometimes hire on for some ready cash,

[1] [i.e. "temporary" - see p.215, cat 116. -Analyst]

464 and be willing to forego his usual demands, temporarily. During the caravan season, some will hire on as mule-drivers for a round trip. Otherwise the day laborer is rare among rural Amhara, and met more often only in provincial capitals and the few cities.

D. Labor and the market-town.

464 Laborers hiring on in the towns for temporary work (e.g. in construction) do so usually through a labor broker. There are no organized factories in the provin-
[467] cial towns, only a few small ones in the main cities, and there is not yet such a modern development as a labor union. Child and female labor is widespread and almost entirely
[465] unskilled. A laborer's daily wage was equated with 25¢ Ethiopian, by clause 6 of the Penal Code of 1930, but the present rate actively paid for urban labor of Amhara is Eth$1.-per day. The Emperor's factory proclamation of 1944 authorized the Ministry of Commerce to regulate hours and conditions of labor, but this actually anticipates future conditions and finds little application at present.

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466 The household servant in the town usually hires out on a monthly basis. The traditional, personal guarantor and 2 witnesses of wage agreement are still necessary. The salary may now be as high as Eth$40.-. The servant is also fed and housed, and if he stays some months may keep any clothing given him. Moreover, his

357 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will
466 usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was
[562] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the
salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 466 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] 875 871 During the present generation a new wlement of modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

875 grades, in the Amhara areas, sometimes also in the south.
871 Most elementary school teachers in the provincial capitals are East Indians, except that Amharic and Coptic religion are taught by Amhara. A graduate of an elementary school can take a job as a teacher himself and begin with a wage of Eth$125.-a month; or as a municipal clerk with about equal income, which places them in the upper income group. Even a graduate of the 5th grade can earn Eth$50.- as a clerk on the bottom rung of the "educated". Or he may secure a teaching job in a church school near his home, and then go to the court of the bishop and wait about ("daj tena") until the great man notices him and confirms him in his job.

871 In view of the high cash value of modern education, almost everyone wishes to enter, though fathers are still reluctant to part with the services of their sons, in cattle herding and harvest-watching, until the boys are 11 years old, so that graduates of elementary schools are frequently 19 years old. The elementary schools are still so few (though increasing) that only the sons of influential "great men" usually manage to be admitted. Secondary schools are available primarly in Addis Ababa, not in provincial Amhara capitals, and there nearly all the teachers are Europeans. Graduates of secondary schools become upper-level government officials.

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632 The preference of Amhara individuals to hire on only for temporary labor, if at all, finds its expression and variation in the market town. Here many events that bring variety into his fairly monotonous rural life,

464 632 happen and can be talked about. Here caravans arrive with all kinds of trade goods, and though the Amhara is not a trader in his culture pattern, he does hire on as transportation helper, and will have his own donkey carry some goods for sale.

443 There is a small daily market in each town. Where no town is near, one day a week a small rural market takes place (e.g. every Tuesday at Maqwamiya in the district of Seqelt) so that farmer and trader can meet Monday through Friday, at these markets set up at crossroads, in a grove of trees, or near a church center.

The big Saturday market takes place in a town terminal of caravan routes; nowadays at the end of an Italian road, also, e.g. at Qolarba in Dembea, where Italian trente-quatro trucks carry imports and exports to Asmara, Eritrea, and the coast, while caravans carry goods from and to the Sudan. Gondar town is an older and bigger Saturday market. To these markets are brought surplus farm products. All routes lead to it, and the well-to-do ride there on mules, their servants beating out a road for them among pack donkeys and pedestrians. In return, Ethiopian retailers (often Muslim) sell goods bought from Arab wholesalers.

While there is some duplication of items of sale at these markets, the daily markets specialize in items used by or obtained from the household: fresh butter sold on a leaf, to put on the hair; melted butter for cooking in "wot"; red bärbärē pods of varying strength, 443 or green ones for "alec̣ha" meat sauce; tỵe͞ff grain; imported and native spices; linseed and nug oil seeds; firewood; chickens; donkeys and sheep and goats, but no more expensive livestock. Approaching feasts, fasts and rainy season change the emphasis and variety of products and activities.

438 The big Saturday market emphasizes items of long-distance trade such as salt, from the lowland plain of Areho, in Danakil, bordering on French Somaliland. Bricks of this coarse-grained salt "Amolye" were formerly used as money, their value increasing with the distance from the place of origin. This has been gradually discontinued during the reign of the present Emperor, and salt is now also imported in crushed pebbles from the Sudan, called "Senar" after the area of origin. The big bar has become rare, is called "lemädäw", and costs from Eth$4.- for a big one to Eth 50¢ for a little one.

438
439 Coffee comes from Jimma. Raw cotton is sold by weight, from the Matamma border of the Sudan, brought on camel back. Spices (e.g. abusda) and incense come from as far as Yemen. Razor blades come from England. Imports from the Sudan include much cotton cloth: "abujedid" for shirt-making, more expensive cotton "stock" material, and now also khaki cloth for shorts and modern bush jackets.

439
[65] Import duty is high, as much as Eth$9.- per "taq̣a", about 45 meters. Some raw cotton is domestic, from the Setit market of the Wolkait jungle border. "Taq̣a"

439 bales of finished material include white khaki, "mä-bruq"; a thinner and cheaper quality, "mahmädi"; and colorful prints, sometimes of rayon and even silk, "balä mänäṭer", used by the Coptic clergy to wrap the tabot in, or to make colorful umbrellas for processions.

In the past, most imports were for the top feudal chiefs and the clergy (e.g. chintz for the mantle
439 replacing some uses of the older burncs). Now every
291 Amhara, even if poor, wants to own a pair of white Jodphurs, for going to town, to church and to special feasts. In the cities, the semi-educated now also sport a long-sleeve, khaki bush jacket, the "duba", worn usually under a light shamma instead of a peasant one, and only fully educated top officials have gone over to full
439 European dress. This has steadily increased imports of cotton cloth, ever since Menelik's victories made even
[293] the poorer Amhara feel "noble". The sun-umbrella once reserved for the king, "jan ṭela" became the ambition of every peasant housewife. Little porcelain cups, "fenjal", are often the only item of foreign origin, besides cotton cloth, found even in remote hamlets, for the use of honored guests.

The drawing power of the big markets was increased still more when the Italians built roads to some of them during 1936-1940. Their heavy trente-quatro trucks bring imported items mostly from Asmara and the Red Sea coast: blankets, wood or glass beads for necklaces, sandals, Egyptian rubber sneakers, Yemen incense and

439 some spices, English razorblades, sewing needles, safety pins, Lux soap in hotelroom size, laundry soap cake, [442] kerosene, etc. The wholesalers, usually Arabs, buy these [443] and sell them to Muslim Ethiopian retailers. Sometimes, in bigger towns, Arabs open regular stalls and even stores to sell these items daily, as well as special luxuries such as chocolate, hard candy, and products of the central Ethiopian government such as matches (a government monopoly), cigarettes for Muslims (also a government monopoly), school notebooks with the picture of the Emperor on the title page, pencils, imported readymade eyeglasses, etc. On their return trips the trente-quatro trucks are heavily laden with produce such as ṭyēff, nug, linseed, peas, beans, honey, sheepskins, cowhides, and in some areas musk from the civet cat, and coffee.

438 . The purchases of the farmer consist in greater part of items from other areas of Ethiopia, notably, salt, coffee, spices, some of the raw cotton and matches. Much of this is still carried by traditional caravan, where no roads wxist or where they have been washed out. Caravans form after the middle of the dry season, and return just before the rainy season, so that the farmer can stock up on staples.

435 To pay for these purchases and for some of the imported items such as razor blades, the farmer brings his produce, but prices fluctuate between seasons, with every arrival or departure of caravans (or trucks), and with distance. For example, 1 quintal (100 kilos) of

435 tyeff in Gondar brings as little as Eth$10.- but in Addis Ababa Eth$30.- and more. Nug seed bring as much as Eth$30. per 100 kilos even at the Gondar market, a rural production area. Gesho, hops, brings as much as Eth$1.- per kilo; some semi-urban farmers grow it as a parttime cash crop (also the drug plant "c̣haṭ" chewed by Muslims). Other products sold by the farmer include honey, peas, beans, maize, sorghum, dagussa, spices, beeswax, chickens brought by farm women, and recently also eggs; milk, butter, livestock big and small, goat-gut ("jemat") for cordage and the "qrar" banjo. Big livestock (cows, oxen and mules) are traded only at big Saturday markets, also the fat-tailed sheep or old cow for the Sunday dinner. At the end of long fasts edible livestock is in much demand [494] and prices may double. It is also noteworthy that despite the poor roads, modern truck transportation is so efficient economically in comparison with traditional caravans, that prices for comparable imported and long-distance domestic products are on the same scale at the big Saturday markets.

443 [492] The big market is also an important governmental administrative center, especially the judicial organization. From ancient times this has been the location of the formally appointed judge, the "dayna", to arbitrate disputes that the curbstone judge has not settled, and to hear cases against accused thieves. 443 651 Here the governor's trade chief, the "nägad-ras", acts as collector of revenue and supervisor of trade practices. He fixes and alters tolls on trails and river crossings,

443 and observes the travelling traders, the "mängädännã".
651 Both chiefs, especially the danya, sit under broad, sha-
[696] dy trees on the market. Nearby is the gibbet, from which
criminals were publicly hung until less than a decade
ago. Recent additions to the market scene include a few
modern tables and chairs at which treasury clerks from
Addis Ababa receive import and other duties; and, within
[758] a barbod wire fence, government "dressers" of the health
department from time to time, especially in epidemics,
give free typhus and other injections to anyone applying
and diagnosed sick.

437 Trade practices of the Amhara differ from much of the Middle East, especially from the Arab, The Amhara is too proud to badger a customer, and the profit motive is not as storng--he is not concerned with financial gain. The Amhara is not concerned at monetary loss in a trade transaction but his temper is aroused if he fears that he has been bettered, outwitted and made the laughing stock of others. If he has sold to a foreigner at only a little above the usual price instead of double or triple, his competitors at the market will jeer at him. In this case he will try to undo the trade, claiming linguistic misunderstanding.

As a result of this fear of being shamed, producers of native articles will not bring manufactured goods to market unless they have a previous firm order, after which the customer has to wait. It is craftsman's trade rather than commercial. This is even true of members of ethnic low-class producers, tanners, saddlemakers, smiths, 437 weavers, potters, etc. They, particularly tanners, may bring finished products to market but only for "show", claiming these items are ordered and merely waiting for the customer to come and fetch.

Even semi-specialists of light-weight products such as umbrella makers and weavers of baskets and mäsob table follow this practice or bring only as much as they feel sure will sell, even at the risk of having to turn away customers. For the ultimate shame would be to have to carry unsold goods back home. This is avoided by selling very cheaply just when the market closes at dusk. The proverb advises the buyer, therefore, as follows:

[539] "To church (go) early,
to market (go) late."

To avoid being outwitted, the Amhara seller usually begins the transaction by asking the buyer to suggest a price he is willing to pay. If the amount is within reason, and if the purchaser is on the same economic level, they will agree on the spot, without haggling. Doubts and dickering occur only when the customer is a stranger or a foreigner, since then the seller has to guess how high he can go, and how much he must charge to avoid being mocked. Such a price increase is called "waga asarrara". If there is no immediate agreement, the Amhara tries to disconcert his customer, or supplier, by indirect insults such as:

> "I'm not expecting a hyena as my guest" ("yäjeb engeda yälläbeñ"), meaning, the animal you are trying to sell me is so lean that it is close to death and soon will be food for the hyena.

437 If bettered in trade, he will try to even the score, both in his heart and before his peers, with veiled insults within hearing of the other party, such as "my mother was not a pottery-maker", alluding to the low-class origin of the seller who has charged too high a price.

Housewives shopping at the market are conscious of "nuisance value". Before going home, if it is early, they loiter at the stall of the Arab merchant toying with the displayed merchandise while he nervously watches, until he gives them little gifts so that they go away, "ayn mämälasha" (lit. turning the eye away, i.e. homeward). The young women receive this with glee at having outwitted the shrewd Arab, and dance away.

When two Amhara have concluded an agreement, they touch each other's outstretched palms while standing very close to each other, and, in the presence of witnesses, swear "Haile Selassye yemut" (lit. may the emperor die, i.e. if the swearer breaks his agreement). This procedure is not followed in little transactions, but in the case of major livestock, because of the family and other social significance.

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177 The Saturday market in a long-settled town ("qedamye gäbaya") has long been the entrance gate for diffusion of foreign goods, ideas, and ethnic groups. The Muslim mosque is usually very close, even at the edge, its minaret overshadowing the market. The teahouses, "shay byēt" are of longtime, Arab introduction, usually operated by Ethiopian Muslims who import the tea and know how to prepare Arab delicacies. It is patronized by Arab whole-

443 177 salers, and other Muslim retailers. Here they discuss caravan trade, import and export, and local business. These Arabs speak enough Amharic for their purposes, but cannot read or write it, so that they employ temporary services of Amhara clerks, graduates or upper classmen of elementary schools, to translate and write documents relating to transactions, taxes and loans. It is these Arab traders who constitute most of the customers of provincial branches of the new State Bank of Ethiopia. Only rarely does a foreign company like Besse have a local branch, operated by East Indian managers. This is recent, while the Arab traders are the successors of former Arab slavetraders, an ancient but now abolished occupation in Ethiopia. Arab traders also serve as personal bankers to Amhara.

The broker, "mäden", may be an Amhara. This is especially true if he is the aforementioned labor broker. He acts as negotiator for business transactions, and (e.g. in the sale of major livestock) personally guarantees that the object sold was not stolen; he is required to make good the loss if it is not so. This is an important form of insurance, for which the broker may charge as little as 1%, payable usually in cash; he is also given a barley beer dinner after the transaction. He, in turn, may employ Amhara loiterers to gather around during transactions and contribute their wit to urge the buyer to close the deal.

563 143 554 The Muslim Ethiopian retailer, unlike the Arab trader, carries little prestige among Amhara. His com-

563 443 554 parative wealth may be envied, but his religion, and his habit of taking several wives from ex-slave (Barya), Sudanese, lowland females, places him on a level with the upper ethnic craftsmen class. The fact that his labor is not manual elevates him a bit. The full Arab from Yemen or Arabia is regarded as a foreigner, and there is little concern about him since he does not participate in the social hierarchy of the Coptic Amhara.

436 Silver coinage for major transactions, until recently, was the Maria Theresa Thaler, bearing the year 1780, even if coined much later, imported, and sometimes referred to as "machedo", sickle. The recent laws of the present emperor provide for confiscation and punishment for possession of this now illegal currency, but peasants and townsmen have them hidden and silversmiths can still obtain them with little difficulty. The habit of burying coins for safekeeping has carried over to modern paper money. Every year cases of buried paper money that decayed in the rainy season become the talk of the town. The former MT Thaler was divided as follows:

1 MT Thaler = 16" temun" silver coins of Menelik; the term "temun" is now used for silver ornaments, though the new Ethiopian 25¢ piece is actually used in exchange, or even in ornaments.

= 16 "gresh", the Egyptian-Turkish piastre coined in 1899, no longer used, and rarely seen.

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= 2 "alad", Menelik half-thaler, no longer used.

= 4 "rub", quarter MT Thalers, no longer in use, but still occasionally quoted.

The term "gresh" is still used in its probable derivative, the well-known "gursha", meaning tip given to a servant, etc., apparently replacing an earlier term. Also, it is interesting that Gresham's Law functions also in Ethiopia: The new coinage, once accepted (rather than fear of prosecution) drove the old MT Thaler out of circulation. Furthermore, from time to time certain items of the new coinage become particularly popular for some temporary reason, and then are hoarded and absent from circulation.

471 In traditional Amhara material culture there is an absence of such processing industries, (except for specializations mentioned), as soap factories, flour mills, brick factories, textile factories, timber mills, sugar industries, power industries (no windmills), though the [648] essentials for such industries exist. Foreigners have, in recent decades, built a few small ones at major centers of population, since Menelik and the present Emperor began handing out concessions. There are economic and national reasons, e.g. the law that foreigners may only rent but not buy real estate. The present government of Ethiopia has a monopoly on and produces matches and cigarettes. 000 Whether private or public, processing industries can be expected to increase gradually and bring about

gradual changes in the technology and, eventually, in the division of labor.

PART III: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

171 Some aspects of the social organization of the Amhara resemble those of medieval Europe at early and middle periods; others the ancient and not so ancient Middle East; still others, perhaps a smaller part, parallel patterns in other parts of Africa. It is an "old-world" pattern of human relationships, both in structure and function, and the noteworthy fact is that much has survived, due to comparative isolation, that has changed elsewhere.

186 Amhara attitudes, concomitant with their social organization, recall the attitude of the "Neolithic pattern of human relations" in Coon's terminology.[69] This pattern is characterized by the attitude: "You stay in your village, and I stay in mine. If your sheep eat our grass we will kill you. Anyone who tries to change our ways is a witch and we will kill him."

In Amhara rural areas--and most Amhara are rural--this attitude still seems to dominate human relations, be they structured as territorial, class, military, legal, ethnic, religious or racial. Feuds between kin groups often last for several generations; loyalties are intensely regional and ethnocentric.

178 While all this can still be observed, change in the direction of modern occidental patterns has begun to seep in very recently, affecting various phases of social organization in varying degrees. Sometimes the structure

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[69] Coon: The Story of Man. 1954.

178 is more affected because of orders sent with increasing rapidity and urgency from the central government at Addis Ababa. Sometimes the central government itself gives conservative lip service to some old structure, while quietly modernizing the function.

1. Land Tenure

A. Political Aspects of the Old Tradition:

631 For many centuries Abyssinia was a confederation of states governed by princes, who recognized the superiority of one of them--the "king of kings"; except for occasional centralization of power in the hands of a particular monarch. Only in very recent times, since the late 19th century, does centralization seem to have developed with greater permanency.

631 423 As a result of this social structure, every subject is in some way a functionary of the ruling power. This may infringe on his private property at any time, and he is bound to various labors and obligations. In principle, all land is considered the ultimate property of the power ruling at the top of the social pyramid.

423 All land tenure is therefore considered subject to the final approval of the "king of kings". This [671] principle was recognized in the ancient law code "Fetha Nagast", which, however, formally recognized the principle of private land property, to be expropriated only in case of rebellion. Private land property was further reaffirmed by clause 9 of the Penal Code of 1930, and

423 the Constitutions of 1931 and 1955.

The two basic forms of land tenure are called "rest" and "gult". "Rest" comes as close to private property, particularly agricultural real estate, as is possible under these circumstances. It is inheritable, and in principle authorities are not to interfere in the enjoyment of it except in case of rebellion or in case there are no heirs. Most land of this type is found in the old Amhara provinces. "Gult" is land controlled by the governing power, which concedes temporary title to officers of the state, in lieu of salary, particularly to military officers and soldier veterans. Resident peasants who occupy and work the land are usually passed on with this grant(resembling some of the nature of a medieval European fief, or a Spanish encomienda), particularly since the grant is usually continued to the following generations for equal services. These services vary in regions, details, peacetime, wartime, etc., but may include taxes, deliveries of produce, personal services to feudal lords, supplies of grain, charcoal and incense to parish churches, conducting own mules as pack animals during military expeditions, feeding travellers who are "guests of the king", and in general carrying out any new obligation the feudal lord of the region has promised the king.

On the other hand, for every one of these services the "gulteñña" could claim land, on the principle that for every function there ought to be a rewarding piece of land. This land was then given the name of the function.

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[423] At the bottom of the social pyramid of land tenure was the "gabbar", the peasant, whose status resembled that of the medieval European serf. In the final step of passing tasks along, he was responsible for carrying them out, though he could shift some manual labor to the slaves under his constant supervision. The gabbar owed regular statute-labor (called "kudād" or "hudād", literally painful labor), resembling the medieval European corvee, and could also be called out for any special labor. At any moment, authority could decree that a bridge was to be built, a church to be constructed or repaired, at an appointed time and place. Thereupon every gabbar would have to appear, carrying his own tools, to work under the direction os the feudal officer, governor, or his lieutenants ("mislanē"). Heavy fines punished failure to appear for this labor.

It is peculiar, perhaps, how this system was internalized by the gabbar. If he was not on good enough terms with his neighbors to call on them for mutual aid, e.g. in housebuilding or harvesting, perhaps due to a quarrel between kin units, he could demand such aid by appealing to the "cheqa shum" (village headman) or governor's lieutenants, who would then proclaim the work as an official [689] task. The penalty for failure to appear, however, was milder; the offender was sentenced to donate a great feast to all the other participants.

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794 Another noteworthy traditional task emphasized the feudal structure of tha church. A priest in charge of periodic services, the "master of the chant", could de-

566 794 mand of the feudal lord that deacons, choir-boys with good voices, be supplied to him. The "gultañña" could be made responsible for this, and would search the countryside for likely peasant boys. For his service in acting as music critic in examining the boys, and as their trainer, the "master of the chant" would receive a specified number of baskets of grain from the feudal lord, who, of course, passed this extra expense on down the line until the bill was finally footed by the peasant gabbar.

566 The term "gabbar" itself is closely related (perhaps derived from) "gebber", feast (especially feasting of guest by noblemen, or soldiers after victory). Indeed, it is the gabbar who supplies the materials for the feasts.

[242] In view of this regular as well as irregular exploitation, it is not surprising that the gabbar did not try to improve the land he worked, and to this day leaves more fields fallow than he works in any given year. A rank above him, the "gultanna" suffered from insecure tenure. Above him loomed the authority of the feudal warlord ("fărăsänya") and the shadow of landowning monasteries and parish churches. Their power, in turn, varied inversely with the power, or weakness, of the "king of kings".

B. Private Property - "rest".

423 "Rest", at least since the days of the Fetha Nägäst and probably earlier, is a form of freehold, with rights and privileges resembling those of a medieval European entail. It is inherited. It is normally free from any statute-labor, It can be expropriated only for rebellion, or certain segments for a public utility such as roadways. The owner has to pay land taxes and a tithe on produce, but can and does pass them on to his tenant.

423 614 The most important factor regarding "rest" is that it is usually owned by a kinship group, predominantly the patrilineal-patrilocal kin. Land of such a kin group is often referred to as "yäwel märēt" (lit. partnership land), and this has led some foreign observers mistakenly to regard Amhara land tenure as communal property. It is that only in a very restricted sense. An individual whose kin have died becomes sole proprietor. At the other extreme, if the next generation has become too numerous, a process of "sharing out" can take place, in which new kinship units "bud off" after the death of a patriarch.

Every few years the elders of a patrilocal kin group allocate land to individuals and to biological (nuclear) families, according to their manpower and to their needs. A father, on the marriage of his son, allocates him some of the kin's "rest" land that he individually holds at the time, so that the son can enjoy the produce of his own labors. In some ways this form

423 614 of land settlement resembles the Middle Eastern (Arab) "musha's" land tenure.

No individual or nuclear family can sell, or otherwise alienate, "rest" land belonging to the kin group. He may ask them for permission to do so, but in Amhara provinces this is usually refused. On the other hand, if he moves to a different province (which has happened particularly since Menelik's borderland conquests), his kinfolk will hold his claim in trust so that a returning grandson can claim his rights in full. He can even do this, in some cases of particularly strong and proud families, if the inheritance is on his mother's side.

It is interesting that the Biblical principle of the kinsman-redeemer of the land is still in force among the Amhara, in the same spirit. Cases of this kind have arisen increasingly in the past decade, because of the emperor's efforts to settle landless squatters, who have worked fallow land and have paid tithe for several years, If such formerly fallow land belonged to "rest" kin groups, they try to evict the squatters through legal(or sometimes illegal) means, thus "redeeming the land" for the kin group.

423 428 614 For purposes of inheritance, landholding kin usually include all descendants to the "fourth house", i.e. the great-grandsons. After that, disputes usually arise. If no kin survives-- a very rare occurrence--the partners of the "mahabber" sodality to which the deceased belonged, have a final claim, before the land reverts to the regional authority. Affinal relations, except for the mate who shares equally with children of the deceased, are not considred kin for purposes of inheritance of land. If there are no children,
[586] the wife has user claims up to half the estate, which would have been her portion in case of divorce.

423 428 614 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-centered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423 566 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

423 566 the Middle East; particularly of the Ottoman empire, where they were also refered to as "çiftliks" (peasant estates that had passed into the possession of soldiers, "sipâhi", who in turn constituted fiefs assigned to officers as personal estates.[70]

423 566 701 The process which created "gult" land can be clearly observed intthe history of Abyssinia toward the end of the 19th century. Soldiers and officers in the armies of Menilek II were assigned conquered Galla lands in lieu of salary. They were free from land tax, but obliged to pay "asrat" (tithe) on produce, which tax they of course passed on to the Galla "gabbar". The sons of these veterans usually assumed the same military responsibilities when they came of age, so that the lands passed on to them on the same terms. These lands were referred to as "mädariya" lands, and

70. Inalcik, Halil: Land Problems in Turkish History. (in) Muslim World, July 1955, pp. 221-8.

423 the plots carried names adsociating them with the specific services owed by the holder of the homestead:
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"land for the rifleman" (infantry)
"land for the guard of prisoners" (military police)
"land for the bearer of the tent" (standard bearer)
"land for the shield-bearer" (bodyguard)
"land for the forager" (quartermaster)
"land for the left flank" (i.e. platoon attacking on the left column); etc.

The "gulteñña" homesteader was always on call for a new military campaign. His land was regarded as his for enjoyment of produce only, like land allocated by a father to his son upon marriage. The size of "gult" land could vary from one gasha (usually about 50 acres) for a soldier-veteran of long service, to as much as 1000 gasha for a high officer of feudal nobility. The latter could, and usually did, set aside part of his "gult" land as endowment for a monastery or church, and the gabbar on such land passed to the control of the church.

There is very little "gult" land in old-Amhara provinces dating from this period of Menelik II. If found there, it is usually older, since his conquests were farther south, southwest and southeast.

On his long and distant campaigns, Menelik II thus found his supply lines assured, for the "gultenna" was obliged to feed passing armies and to aid the military foragers. He had also to act as host to any passing "nagadras" (treasurer, customs agent) of Menelik during intervals of peace.

423 566 701 If these interludes of peace lengthened greatly, the feudal knight ("färäsenya") would often conclude a contract with his "gulteññas", which gave both parties some security in what they could expect of each other in services and privileges. This contract usually took the [427] form of "siso" (lit. one-third). The "gulteñña" thus became a sharecropper, paying 1/3 of his produce to the feudal lord after each harvest, working statute-labor for him one day in three, making his team of oxen available on a basis of one day in three, Sometimes the "gulteñña" thus became a sharecropper and little better off than the "gabber", especially if no war service interrupted the arrangement for many years. Though he could pass on much of the labor to his own gabbars, he himself sometimes became so debt-ridden to the feudal landlord above him that his status resembled that of a Mexican peon. "Siso" contracts were rare in Shoa, where the "gulteñña" was frequently called to war, and his status as honorable and free soldier-veteran thus never faded away.

The fortunes of war ruled the life of the "gulteñña" much more than the owner of "rest" property. For if the Ras (feudal top nobility) of his province, under whom the gulteñña was fighting, lost in a war or in a rebellion, the gulteñña found himself under a newly-appointed Ras who might ignore customary relaxation of burdens, who might even confiscate the "gult" lands and make the homesteaders "gabbar" serfs, leaving them only the alternative of escaping into the bush. Outside of Shoa,(where fertile land is more expensive and more closely guarded), the

423 "gulteñña" and his family might try to become squatters, 566 "chesañña", on someone's fallow land, and risk being cha- 701 sed away by a kin unit claiming that territory. Or, permitted to remain on his old lands, a "gulteñña" might suddenly find that the new feudal lord of the province was enclosing ("kelkel", declared forbidden) land formerly used as pasturage or for agriculture, to give to his own successful soldier veterans, and exacting quotas of oxen, mules and honey from the former "gulteñña".

178 423 As long as the "gabbar" system was still in full force, the "gulteñña" at least had someone to exploit in turn, to ease his own burdens. Now that the present emperor has declared the "gabbar" system ended (though much of it survives), even this relief is passing. Furthermore, the new army is salaried, so that the basic function of the "gult" system has already disappeared. The only hope the sons of "gulteññas" have is to have their lands declared "rest", private property, for otherwise they will become landless. This means that they must work the land themselves and pay tithe on the produce; otherwise squatters can alienate it from them.

D. Endowed Lands -- "rest-gult".

423 The many variations of regional "rest" and "gult" lands sometimes crystallize to a combination type referred to as "rest-gult".

423 Such types of land tenure arose in the past when a king awarded land for personal service, or in gratitude, as "gult" land, without specifying the conditions under which such land might pass to the heirs of the recipient.

423 Land donated to the church, in areas far from a
794 monastery or parish that could easily administer it,
sometimes belong in this category. In gratitude for
victory, a king would sometimes establish ecclesiastical
fiefs, "rim", for the support of officiating priests and
boy deacons. The most famous endowment of this kind occur-
red in 1270 A.D., when archbishop Täklä Haymanot received
1/3 of the land of Abyssinia from the "Solomonic Dynasty"
he had helped to restore. The archbishop immediately
founded monasteries to administer the property and to
[793 supervise the "gabbar on it. Priests and monks since
then have served in functions similar to chaplains, and
have carried the "tabot" representing the sacred ark,
into battles, much like the priests of the ancient Israel-
ites. Endowments have continued to add land to the church,
"mäsqäl märēt" (lit. lands of the cross), and a priest is
usually sent to act as local administrator, "aläqa" (lit,
chief). He also supervises the functioning of a church
built on land not given to the church, and often acts as
if the surrounding land were "gult" land belonging to
the church.

The moral power of the church in many localities is so strong that the borderlines between "rest" and "gult" may become hazy. Aging persons often try to

423 donate some plots to the church as "sämonanya", to have
794 masses read for their souls after their deaths. Widows,
who often take vows as nuns, try to endow the church if
they can. Sometimes, "gulteññas" threatened with expro-
priation, sought the protection of the church, so that
423 they could remain on their lands. Sometimes parish priests
793 practice nepotism by inviting their nephews or other kins-
men to settle on endowed land surrounding the parish
church, without paying rent or performing heavy labors.
In return, this arrangement serves the local priests as
life insurance and income-insurance, for they will always
be certain of supplies of produce, beer, meat, incense,
clothing, etc., from their grateful kinfolk, for them-
selves and their offspring.

The local priest then also acts as patron of his kinfolk against the regional administration, interceding for them when they become involved in litigation, acts as their "guarantor" ("was") when they apply for jobs or seek more land from the governor or neighboring landlord. This nepotism actually seems on the increase, since the present emperor abrogated the feudal rights of all church lands in 1942 (though reinstituting some in exchange for services such as education, a few years later). Now that the church has lost the right to charge feudal rent, parish priests are more eager than ever to have kinfolk settle around them, to avoid dependence on payment from parents whose boys are enrolled in the church school.

E. Some Regional Variations, in Amhara provinces.

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The sharpest regional variations are between the old-Abyssinian, Coptic north, and the areas conquered by Menelik II to the south. But variations exist to considerable degree among the northern provinces also.

Shoa, particularly the old-Amhara sections, enjoyed many exemptions from burdens which have been mentioned. "Siso" peonage was almost non-existent, and "gulteññas" were involved in warfare so much that they enjoyed a maximum of "gult" exemptions. In the past they felt as secure in their tenure as "restenyas". The highest Amhara nobility came from the Shoa districts of "Mänz" and "Wanchit", where their lands had actually been "rest" property for centuries. However, in much of Shoa the old kinship holdings had broken up in consequence of the Galla invasion prior to the 19th century. When Menelik II reconquered these areas they became "gult" though under most favorable conditions for "gultennas".

In Gojjam and Begemdir most of the land remained "rest", since Galla invasions did not reach that far to any great extent. This land has remained unmeasured to this day, despite the efforts of the present emperor to ascertain titles to land, replace traditional "status" with "contract", and provide for fixity of tenure. Provincial Amhara resistence to this change is still strong, and the residents have been permitted to continue to pay the low land taxes of 1927 for the time being. In Gojjam, during the rule of the provincial dynasty of Ras Hailu,

184 which ended with his unsuccessful rebellion of 1929,
423 much land was "rest-gult", and there were many kinds of tax exemptions for heirs of veterans, who often paid only the tithe on grain and a small tax on cattle.

In Begemdir province (capital: Gondar), most of the land also remains unmeasured, for the same reason. Much of the land is "rest" owned by kin groups who guard it jealously against alienation; and the old church lands are are regarded as "rest". In the southwestern, lower, section of Gondar town and some nearby rural land, "rest" is owned by Ethiopian Muslims, mostly traders, who purchased it from the church, long ago. In scattered rural areas some families of ethnic specialists like the Falasha smiths own land considered "rest-gult", given to their ancestors in reward for services rendered Menelik's armies in the 19th century. This process has been discontinued (artisans are now in business for themselves and are supposed to pay a trade tax to the central government), and most Falashas live under very uncertain terms of tenure, paying tithe and other taxes, which worries the Amhara claimants to this territory.

F. Crown Lands and Efforts to Centralize Land Tenure.

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656 In the old tradition of land tenure, the king held some very personal land, inherited or conquered, for the support of the royal household, "mād-bēt". He added to it by confiscating land of unsuccessful feudal rebels.

423 656 He could do with "mād-bēt" lands as he pleased, without interference from kin groups, the church, or other local-feudal dynasties.

654 656 423 Thus the present emperor, when he was still merely regent, and a young man in his twenties, began his program of modernization and centralization in his own "mad-bet" in Harar province. He organized the coffee-growing of that area as a cash crop for export, and, more significantly, reduced the burdens on the "gabbar", improved security of tenure, appointed supervisors to see that matters would not slip back, and instructed them to report to him as the central power. He also set up elementary schools in several locations. At regular intervals he toured his lands personally. As a result, "gabbar" from neighboring feudal estates were eager to have the protection of his "mād-bēt".

423 656 These efforts were a departure from the traditional pattern of high feudal nobles on their "mād-bēt" (though, on the other hand, no one could criticize him for doing as he pleased on his own "household land"). The others appointed trustees, "täwälaj", usually 12, to administer their land, while they remained absentee landlords at the court of the "king of kings". These trustees were u usually appointed from patriarchal elders and lowest nobility, and were responsible for the support of the parish churches of their area, with priest, deacons, däbtära (scribe-choristers), etc.

423 651 In the traditional pattern there was another means of exercising some central control, through the collection

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651 of land taxes and tithe, provided these were not entirely claimed by powerful local feudal nobility or the church. These tax-collectors, who often lived dangerously, were given land as reward for services; this land was called "mälkäña" land. They also acted as overseers of stature-labor, "hudäd". They were usually free from both land tax and tithe on their own territory, and, although their sons could inherit the job and the land that went with it, their security of tenure was even weaker than that of the "gulteñña". Partly this was due to the ever-shifting power factors, for, when the central power was weak or distracted by a distant war, the tax-collector might find himself working as a provincial functionary, intermediate between the cheqa shum (headman) and the provincial feudal lords.

423
656 When central power was greatly strengthened in the days of Menelik II, there was a considerable increase in "malkana" lands. This was particularly the case in lands he had conquered from the Galla landlords ("balbat"). He expropriated 3/4 of their lands for distribution among his military veterans, but in consolation granted the balbats the remaining 1/4 as "mälkäña" land. This freed them from taxes, enabled them to pass their remaining landholdings on to their sons, and turned them into loyal subjects of the central power which alone could protect their tenure from future expropriation. The outcome of this amazingly Solomonic solution of an age-old problem of land tenure in a feudal country has turned the Galla balbats today into the most reliable

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656 supporters of the central government.

The descendants of these balbats, now educated in
423 the high schools of Addis Ababa, are being sent into even
647 the old-Amhara provinces at present, by Emperor Haile
651 Selassie, to act as salaried collectors for the central treasury ("Gemja-Bet") (so that the function of the former malkana has again come full circle, though the term is no longer used for the office). In fact, the new centralized tax-gathering has ended the office of the old, provincial "mälkäña", and they, much like the "gultäñña", can only hope to have their lands affirmed as "rest". This they can hope to achieve only if they work the lands themselves and pay tithe on produce, otherwise it may be lost to squatters. Their final security of tenure, by contract instead of vague status (they have lost the latter), will come only when the lands are measured and modern titles issued, which has not yet happened in the old-Amhara areas that resist this. The non-resistant Galla balbats of Shoa province are thus more secure in tenure, and will remain so as long as the central govern-is strong.

423 Measurement of land is called, traditionally, "throw-
804 ing the rope" ("yaṣe gämäd"). This rope may be made of cordage, plant fibers, traditionally 40 elbow lengths long. In northern districts it is sometimes made of plaited oxhide, and called "qäläd".

423 The "rope was thrown" widely in Galla lands conquered by Menelik II, Three-quarters of these lands were then divided into gashas of 80-100 acres each, and

423 the peasants occupying them were allocated as "gabbar" to soldiers and officers. A soldier-veteran who had family might have received 2 to 5 families "gabbar"; officers 7 to 10, district commanders 30 and more "gabbar" families, governors hundreds of gabbar. From the gabbar's point of view, this constituted little change in his lot, for he had served the Galla balbat in similar ways. Gabbar were also allocated to the Coptic churches built on the new territories. Menelik II regarded these new parishes and buildings as permanent outposts of Amhara society in the Galla south.

423
651 The first emperor to strengthen central power, in modern times, and to begin land reforms, was Emperor Theodore. In the 1850's and 1860's he instituted a new office, still retained. This was the appointment of trusted lieutenants, "mislanē", to act as tax-collectors, in place of the uncertain "malkana" who were always being subdued by regional feudal powers. He appointed as "mislanē" persons from different regions, who would own no fealty to local lords, and could be relied upon to owe personal loyalty directly to the central power that had appointed them. This was the first type of officer not rewarded by land grants, but receiving salary out of the taxes he had collected. At present, a century later, the office of "mislanē" is little changed, except that he is now directly responsible to the provincial governor who is himself an appointee of the Emperor and who is frequently shifted to another province to prevent him from growing local roots.

G. Present Holdings and Problems of Amhara Peasants of Begemdir Province.

105 423 Most of the Amhara peasants of Begemdir (and other provinces) live much as their ancestors have lived for centuries. They subsist largely on the products of their lands, needing relatively few gooda and services from outside the province. They do not care for profit and loss accounting. Their social organization is built on visible human relationships. They do not welcome modern bookkeeping and registration, particularly with regard to land tenure, which the modern central government is gradually attempting to foist on them; adding, to the proud provincial Amhara mind, insult to disturbance by doing it through "Galla" clerks from Shoa province.

423 The basic land unit to which the Amhara peasant of Begemdir refers in transactions, is the "qada", usually a little less than half an acre. The average "gasha" may contain as many as 150 "qada", varying with the relative fertility of the soil. Several patrilocal hamlets, constituting a "mandar" (villageship) and supervised by one cheqa shum (headman), may control as many as 10 gashas, (about 500 acres.). The average farmer, supporting his family of procreation and an aged parent and aunt, may control, on the average, about 50 qada (about 20 acres), half of which he may leave fallow at any given time.

423 427 The richest farmer in the rural vicinity of Gondar, a member of the Qemant (Cushitic-speaking) ethnic group, owns 8 gasha (about 400 acres), which is considered fabulous wealth by his Amhara neighbors. However, with the aid of his sons and servants, he cultivates only one gasha at any given time. He parcels out the remaining 7 gasha, except for some fallow land, to landless tenant farmers, many of them ex-slaves, usually in plots no bigger than 10 qada (about 4 acres), which is considered the limit one man can plow and seed without help. The rent they pay him consists of one "madiga " of tyeff grain (about 25 kilo); payable by each. Each also pays him 1/2 madiga of barley, referred to as "qolo", tribute to his "household". His agents also collect the 10% tithe, in produce, which he is expected to pass on to the government, and the new Eth$4.- education tax. He invest part of his profits in cows for his increasing herds.

423 651 For purposes of taxation, of peasants, the government treasury must rely on the judgment of the headman, ("cheqa shum"), who is difficult to check because the land is unmeasured and a "gasha" is a flexible concept. Therefore, his supervisor, usually the mislane, can only base a check on past, customary payments.

[609] 423 651 653 Taxcollectors are known to be generous when dealing with even distant kinfolk, or with priests and their relatives, and to even out the receipts by pressure on low-class ethnic minorities, justifying this by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts.

423 by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income
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663 from their handicrafts. Among the methods of this
extortion is the "initiation fee" of as much as Eth$3.-
per qada, when freshly cleared from the bush. Another
impressment consists of "voluntary" supplies regularly
paid to the Coptic parish church in the locality, by
non-Coptic ethnics. Also, the feudal landlord usually
asks them for a special "pasturage fee"--as much as
Eth$2.- per qada of fallow land--with the further condition
that no more than two oxen (or cows) graze on each
qada. Where a Coptic farmer may pay perhaps Eth$10.-
tithe on his semi-fertile 50 qada, the non-Coptic farmer
may be made to pay double to four times that for
similar produce on an equivalent plot of land. While
[871] the new education tax is the same, the non-Coptic artisan
finds it very difficult to enroll his boy in the
overcrowded elementary school in the provincial capital.

423 The average "rest"-owning farmer working 10 qada
651 every year, may harvest about 50 madiga of tyeff grain,
511 selling it for Eth$150.-(In the rainy season it would
bring twice that); plus 30 madiga barley, Eth$60.-
plus some honey, if he has it.

If the tax-collector is his friend, his tithe may amount to as little as Eth$5 to 10, his education tax Eth$2 to 4. His land tax based on the rate of 1927 will be very low, and his pasturage, as Coptic non-artisan, free.

511 Thus he has enough for his basic needs including
the purchase of a new toga (shamma) per year, and perhaps
a new donkey. However, he cannot normally afford

511 prestige items of luxury, such as a mule, a fine saddle, and he would not want to "waste" his money on imported anadals. His expenses for shelter and furnishings are almost nil in terms of cash, and even a beer jar can be purchased for Eth$1.- in rural areas.

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578 His basic needs filled with a minimum of labor, and his wants few, the "rest"-owning Amhara farmer views modern land measurement with suspicion. He fears that disputed land with vague boundaries will be declared government land and be redistributed. In the absence of written deeds; dependence on remembered local traditions and natural landmarks; and the practice of letting fallow land revert to bush to be cleared anew every few years, disputes are many at any time. Rumors from southern areas where courts have for several years now recognized tithe receipts as evidence of ownership, reinforces these fears. Alienation of any part of one's land is strongly objected to as loss of prestige and weakening of kin bonds. As a result, there is little appreciation among "rest"-holding Amhara of Begemdir for the efforts of the emperor, to replace vague "status" of land tenure with assured "contract", to have real estate deeds issued and registered, to end the tax exemptions of feudal lords and the church, to institute uniform land taxes, etc. Any general change, they feel, is bound to raise the socio-economic level of non-Coptic ethnic minorities and depress their own.

423 Several land laws were included in the Penal

423 Code of 1930 of the central government. "Rest" land was protected by a provision that it could not be sold without permission of the district judge. This assured that the transaction would be public, enabling the kinfolk to protest. In the provinces of Begemdir, Semyen and Gojjam, where land was considered plentiful, most land consisted of freehold "rest", which remained unsurveyed, and in practice virtually unsaleable. In Shoa province, much land formerly held by veterans and officials ("gultennas") has reverted to the government. But most "gabbar" tenants still owe the 2/3 of produce previously paid. The tenants of the descendants of "gultennas" can become owners only by purchasing the land; meanwhile their income goes to pay the rent, the tithe, etc., leaving no capital to accumulate.

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651 Under this Code the church was still exempt from land tax on its huge holdings. The laws of 1944 abrogated this exemption, but the amendment of 1947 partially restored the right of the church to claim "voluntary contributions" locally, from recipients of benefits such as education. The law of 1944 was a victory for the resisting provincial Amhara peasants, in that it limited, temporarily, the land taxes of Begemdir, Semyen and Gojjam (also the Coptic province of Tigre) to the low rate of 1927. The tithe could continue to be on an "estimated" basis. All taxes permitted "scaling" according to fertility.

Thus the old immunities and inequalities in

423 [51] taxation of landholdings have been only partially swept away. Enforcement in the old-Amhara provinces is lax. The "gabbar" system, abolished by decree after the emperor's return in 1941, continues as the broad basis of land occupancy, and as a major pillar of social structure, with only little, gradual change.

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2. The Military Camp and its Significance in Amhara Social Structure.

The preceding section on land tenure contained a number of references to the traditional military organization and function among the Amhara. This was inevitable, for the traditional army, particularly the military camp, constituted one of the most significant pillars of Amhara social structure. Even now, when [554] Amhara children cannot see it any more, the military camp lives on as "normal social organization" in the minds of the middle-aged, and in the titles of nobility still being bestowed several times a year by the emperor.

For, as recently as 1929, it flourished in full flower, e.g. at the headquarters of the provincial dynastic head of Gojjam, Ras Haylu, and, somewhat less flagrantly, at the provincial court of the lord of Gondar (Begemdir Province), Ras Kassa.

A. The Structure and Function of the Military Camp.

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The number of individuals directly involved in the totality of the pattern of the military camp was never fixed. On the contrary, the quantity involved was extremely fluid, there was much joining and deserting, and no commander ever seemed to be able to force any but his closest retainers to remain against their will. Historians believe that the army even of

701 703 as great a military figure as Emperor Men°lik II was close to falling apart at the time of his great victory over the invading Italians in 1896. The Amhara resists discipline except for short-lived adulation of a military hero who inspires him; he comes to fight, not to wait; even today, in the modern army, Ethiopian officers characterize the Amhara soldier as fearless, brave, but unwilling to take orders and having a tendency to act as an individual in battle. He is characterized as almost opposite from the patient Galla soldier who takes orders and cooperates smoothly with his military outfit, but rarely takes initiative.

[578] Regional clannishness, easily stirred by news from the home district, was another motive that could cause large segments of a traditional Amhara army to vanish almost overnight. A third development that would whittle away an army gradually was the almost inevitable outcome of having been stationed in one vicinity too long. In this case, the countryside was soon stripped bare by the military foragers, the "gabbar" was suffering famine himself, as if a vast cloud of locusts had nibbled away every leaf ("gonāçhc̣ha̋fä"). [727] A fourth motive, related to the first, might be loss of confidence in the strength and wisdom of their chief, in which case the soldiers not wanting to return home without glory took to the woods and became bandits ("shefta"). The latter were a major problem after every war. Even a biberal statesman like Ras Imru, as governor of Gondar after the liberation of the country in World War II, found harsh measures the only remedy.

701 found harsh measures the only remedy.

With these qualifications, the quantity involved in a military camp of a provincial "Ras" (lit. head, actually marshall of high nobility as well as traditional leader of military forces of a province) would consist of several thousand soldiers; plus a huge ring of huts of camp followers, artisans, impressed local gabbar", their womenfolk serving as combination cook-concubine, and thornbush corrals for pack mules and donkeys. It resembled a medieval European army encamped, but with Middle Eastern and African overtones.

For example, the Ras himself would have to make frequent personal inspection tours of storehouses and major activities, if he did not want disorganization. In his presence, his men would fall all over themselves, running to carry out his orders instantly, to curry his favor. In his absence, his officers and men would relax after the fashion of free men, to their way of thinking. A chief, asked about the number of men under his command, would reply "many", not so much for reasons of concealment and pride (i.e. "the number of my men is without end"), but because he often did not know, nor care. However he knew exactly how many rifles he had in his command.[72]

712 The inner center of the camp contained the big, round tent ("das", tent of joy) of the "ras"; a guest and banquet tent for noble visitors ("adarash"); the tent of the sacred "tabot" (wooden tablet from the Holy of Holies of a church) and the chief

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[72] Griaule, M.: Le Travail en Abyssinie. Revue Internat. du Travail, 23, Fev. 1931, p.5.

712 clergy; storehouse for the best military and civilian equipment ("eqa byet"); and the separate food establishments of the household of the ras: meat hut ("sega byet"), mead hut ("ṭäj byet"), cooking hut ("woṭ byet"); and the baking hut ("enjära byet").

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701 In front of this center, the bodyguard was encamped, led by the "däjazmach" (lit. guardian of the gate), the highest rank after the "ras", usually a young nobleman aspiring to the higher rank upon the death of the "ras" who was usually his kinsman, sometimes his own father. To the right of the center camped the "qänyazmach" (lit. guardian of the right), the next highest rank, who, in battle, commanded the right flank of the attacking army. To the left of the center camped the "gerazmach" (lit. guardian of the left), next in rank, commander of the left flank of the attacking army.

701 All these commanders belonged to high nobility, in this order, and were granted conquered lands, quantity and quality of the land being allocated as fiefs in the order of rank. Sometimes "battlefield commissions" would reward an individual military officer of commoner origin, and elevate him to "gerazmach", with rights to an appropriate fief. More often the gerazmach was a distant kinsman of the ras, perhaps a "poor relation".

Each of these nobles commanded a division that included cavalry, which consisted of "färäsenya" (lit. horsemen, i.e. knights), whose services were usually

701 rewarded by a "gultenna" fief. Their immediate commander in frontal attack was a military officer, "fitawrari" (lit. advance guard), a high rank of military nobility, and the starting rank of all young nobles upon reaching military age. Common soldiers, who did not own a horse and a rifle necessary to elevation to knighthood, made up the infantry. They were the last to benefit from the division of lands.

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712 In camp, the cavalry usually ringed the center of feudal nobility and bodyguard. Outside this ring were the numerous lean-to huts ("gojo") or somewhat sturdier "säqäla" huts of the common soldiery, their hearths of rocks, and their concubine-cook womenfolk. Each minor chieftain imitated his superiors by grouping retainers around his tent, with himself at the top of a little social, hierarchical pyramid. He acted the "telleq säw" (lit. great man), generous in his rewards, but terrible in his anger. He might wear a lion mane.

Thus the camp consisted of three concentric rings, much as did the church, which may or may not have been a coincidence, but which to this day dominates the traditional Amhara view of feudal organized society. In fact, the "tabot" from the Holy of Holies, inner sanctum of the church, was physically represented inside the innermost center of encampment, serving as military chapel.

Special privilege characterized the second circle, much like the "mäqdäs" of the church reser-

701 712 ved to the priesthood. Within the second circle of military encampment, protected by the ring of cavalry, were housed the "bajirond" (treasurer-quartermaster-ordnance), scribes, artisans of all kinds, chamberlains ("aggafari") serving the high nobles, the military police ("zäbäña", lit. watchmen), the thornbush corrals of battle horses and the horse watchmen, cookhouses, and latrine areas for the privileged centers.[72]

The rear of the camp, as well as the rear guard during march, (called the "däjän sefra"), was usually commanded by the most trustworthy, noble councilor of the king or ras; his title was "Blatengēta" (lit. Councilor), a semi-civilian title about equivalent to Dejazmach. But unlike the latter, it was usually held by an older, wiser, less tempestuous, slow-moving gray-bearded friend of the commander-in-chief.

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B. Social and Psychological Roles in Military Life: Noble Officers and Common Soldiers.

The location in camp of military officers and men thus indicated the social position of feudal nobles, soldier fief-holders, and "gabbar"-sharecroppers in civilian life. The rank-order can be listed, with some simplification, as follows:

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72. Griaule, M.: Un Camp Militaire Abyssin. Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Tome IV, 1934, pp. 117-122.

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Table 4: Feudal Nobility: Title, Hierarchy, Military Rank and Function, Land Tenure

Title	Military Rank	Military Function	Land-Tenure Reward	Hierarchy of Nobility
farasenya (lit, knight on horseback)	basic in officer class	cavalry	gult fief	may be elevated to nobility, and get rest land.
balambaras (lit. lord of mountain-fortress	basic in officer class	various, active battle duties; e.g. chief of shield bearer("gasha Jägrē aläqa")	gult fief	basic rank in low nobility of owners of rest lands.(Baron).
gerazmach (lit. commander of left flank)	(lieutenant or captain)	command left flank of an army division	rest lands	basic rank of aspirants to higher nobility
qāñazmach (lit.commander or right flank)	(major, in European equivalent)	command right flank of an army division	rest lands	next higher rand, permanent, usually inherited nobility
fitawrari (lit. commander of advance guard)	(colonel, in European equivalent)	command frontal attack of massed army division	rest lands	next higher rank. Basic rank of teen-age royalty
däjazmach (lit. commander of the gate)	(General. Duke, in Feudal Europe)	commander of army division; commander of bodyguard in camp.	rest lands	next higher rank. Rank of young royalty on reaching manhood.

ras (lit.head)	(Marshall.Arch-duke in Feudal Europe)	commander-in-chief of an entire army	rest lands	next higher rank. Head of provincial dynasty. Adult royalty prior to becoming king.
negus (king)	----	commander of several armies	rest provinces	formerly independent king. No longer in existence
lej (lit."Childe")	----	(may be appointed Däjazmach or Fitawrari as he grows up)	-----	title of infant son of king or of ras. title of sons of emperor
lul (Royal Prince)	----(usually appointed to Ras, as he grows to manhood)		-----	title of sons of emperor
negusä nägäst or negus negusti (lit. king of kings)	----	commander-in chief of all armies	rest of home province (mad-byet); ruler of entire country.	assumes highest nobility on coronation.

701 554 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the commoner-soldiery, which made up the renk and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors hed no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 726 521 535 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

782 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal
726 boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the
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535 emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Ṭemqät), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

[533] The song and dance is also referred to as "dankira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "z̲afen" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[727] The dance after the victorious battle is called "hoto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brendishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebahalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e. the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
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535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

411 The typical weapon was the spear (the word "ṭor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

411 various shapes were somewhat more common. Long lances and shorter throwing spears, both with fine, long iron 714 heads, were in use. Round rhinoceros shields belonging to officers were often ornamented carefully with brass or even silver or gold plates arranged in geometric patterns; circles; colorful velvet embroidery, granted as reward gifts for special bravery. Crown-like bands worn around forehead and skull, of gold, silver or lion-mane, were given to officers as decorations for bravery.

More lasting awards were available only in the form of "gult" fiefs.

701 Table 5: Land Tenure of Artisans and Chaplains.

Title and Rank	Function	Reward in Land Tenure
bajirond (lit. treasurer)	(ethnic-origin) quartermaster, chief of artisans	"rest-gult" lands, inheritable.
qēs (priest)	army chaplain, carrier of sacred "tabot" (representing home church, and symbolizing the ark of the ancient Israelites.	"rest-gult" land, given to parish church.

725 The Amhara army on the march (or any Abyssinian army) has been described as resembling a migrating people rather than a disciplined-looking army. Supplies and equipment crawling over the landscape on donkey or human carriers, might amount to two-thirds of the army. Servants, priests, women and children, household utensils, cattle and sheep, huge jars of beer, etc., seemed to surround the main military caval-

725ry and footsoldiers and main tents in all directions.[73] But there was a central structure, and well-understood functioning of parts.

725 701 Only officers from the dejasmach upward could announce the signal for mobilization and decampment, through the sound of drums and bugles. The time and place of assembly would be announced beforehand. The Council of War would meet and decide strategy as well as tactics: Who should fight where, and what secret signals were to be used. This Council usually consisted of the king, the ras commanders of armies, the dejazmach commanders of main divisions, and the blatengeta of the rear guard. After that, the young commanders of the advance guards, "fitawrari", who understood tactics, received their orders, and were sent two to three days ahead of the main body, for reconnaissance or to maintain contact with the enemy. The cavalry would protect the right and left flanks of the main body, commanded by appropriate gerazmach's, qanazmach's and fitawraris.

The main body, "gädam ṭor", was directly commanded by the king. In his absence, a temporary commander-in-chief was elected by the Council of War, with the title "abägaz", or "yäṭor ṭäqlay" (lit. war chief). The main body also included the stores ("eqa"), the quartermaster ("bajirond") and his artisans, and the priests with the tabot. Finally, the rear guard protected from unexpected enemy attack, buried the dead, picked up the weary and wounded, and was itself organized into right

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[73] Rohrer: Beiträge.... 1932, p.117.

725 and left flanks.

701 Fanning out in all directions, detachments of light cavalry and foragers on foot, "fano", could destroy and plunder enemy land to do as much damage as possible while on the march. When re-encampment was ordered, the tent of the king or field commander was set up first, and the army divisions and followers, seeing this, grouped themselves accordingly and settled in their proper locations, distances, areas and relative positions. The quartermaster thereupon took over the functions of maintenance and supplies.[74]

[554] This pattern of "relative positions" and functions carried over into civilian life, and dominated land tenure, administration, law, social structure, organized religion, the life cycle, artistic expression, and a multitude of human relations.

C. Significance of the old Military Organization in Modern Change.

178 The spear, the rhinoceros shield and armies paid by land grants have now become memories of the past, [554] though recent past. Yet most of the attitudes and many of the roles that accompanied the old military organization still linger and dominate social organization.

[423] Much of the old land tenure is still little changed in the old-Amhara provinces, as has been pointed out.

74. Eadie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, pp. 86-7.

554 Most of the old military titles of nobility are still awarded several times each year by the present emperor, though these titles no longer have military, but only civilian, honorary, semi-administrative significance. This is partly due to the fact that the old titles, though not abrogated, have to be reaffirmed for individual members of each succeeding generation that has inherited only the moral but not the legal right to these titles. This enables each emperor to use the titles to reward, stimulate, needle and punish (through delay or withholding), a subtle weapon too pleasant for even the present liberal emperor to disavow. The only title no longer in use is that of king ("negus"), but even this had been offerred to the present Crown Prince in lieu of the future crown (he refused it to maintain his claim).

There has been a gradual increase in awarding titles to commoners, as high as "däjazmach", e.g. to reward deserving directors-general and ministers of the central administration (or, in some cases, to subdue their criticism of indolent fellow-officials of noble birth). The old semi-civilian title "blatengēta" or, "blatta", has become fully civilian, and is given to scholarly councilors who are trusted by the emperor. A famous example was "Blatta" Herouy, who served the emperor in international diplomacy at the time of the Italian invasion. Another title of warm, even more personal, appreciation, is "bitwädded" (lit. the Beloved).

554 635 Considerable reduction has been the lot of the title "ras", which in the past stood for not only military marshall, but often dynastic head of a province with private armies loyal only to him, and therefore often in competition with the throne. Of the old dynastic nobilities, the following heads still hold the title "ras":

Ras Kassa and Ras Imru, both kinsmen of the present emperor; Ras Haylu of the provincial dynasty of Gojjam, who is under close supervision; Ras Seyum of the provincial dynasty of Tigre, also under close control; Ras Gäbre Haywot of Dessie province, a kinsman of the present empress. A non-member of the old dynasties has been advanced to "ras" for loyal service: Ras Abebe, war hero and now minister of war.

[554] 552 Young noblemen who have mastered the art of horsemanship, as they are expected to, still assume a "war name", called "färäs sem" (lit. horse name), and name their favorite steed accordingly, much like medieval knights. For example, Emperor Menelik II could be politely addresses as "Abba Daño" (lit. Father of Judgment, his horse name) which he had assumed as a young man, after which his battle horse "daño" was named, and which flattered him both by emphasizing his position as the country's supreme ruler and judge, and by referring to his admired record as victor in many difficult battles. Emperor Haile Selassie I assumed the horse name "Abba Taqlay" (lit. he enveloped, i.e. the enemy) when a young nobleman, but no longer uses it.

552 A favorite horse name was "Abba Dulla" (lit. father of a tough weed), named after a weed that is difficult to uproot, and that regrows despite efforts to the contrary.

714 Although rhinoceros shields have not been used for at least 20 years and with them has gone the job of the personal shieldbearer, the term "gashay"(my shield) is still used appealingly toward any male protector or paternal figure, especially by young men or by women of any age. Conversely, an older man may refer to his junnior trusted aide as "gasha jãgrey", my shieldbearer.

579 Banditry (shefta), much reduced in recent years by harsh measures requiring the use of the army and capital punishment, still appears occasionally as a form of social protest. In the past, when a minor nobleman felt unjustly treated by a feudal superior, e.g. passed over in promotion, he would often "take to the bush" with his retainers, pillaging and even murdering, hoping that his ferocity would either intimidate the ruler of the province to negotiate with him, or arouse his desire to re-enlist so brave a bandit. Guerilla activities during the Italian occupation by these Amhara "arbañoch" (lit. patriots, self-styled), led the Italians to attempt negotiations on several occasions. It was difficult to demobilize some of the disappointed, irregulars, some of whom turned shefta after the war. Since then, peasants short of cash or unhappy about parting with much produce at tax-paying time, sometimes turn into highwaymen temporarily. It is the duty of the rural, non-uniformed police ("nãch lēbash), the "thiefcatchers-

579 in-white", to control this. Sometimes these resort to the old-fashioned and officially illegal "afarsata" collective arrest of a series of suspected hamlets.

644 701 Another old pattern that survives is the personal bodyguard of the supreme ruler, i.e. the emperor, which has now increased to a size equal in manpower to the Ethiopian army itself, and is reputed to be far better trained and equipped. Centered at the capital and a few strategic spots, with greater mobility than the army, and battle experience gained in Korea, it contains much of the Galla "balbat" element directly loyal to the present royal family. The regular army is scattered throughout the country, and is utilized against periodic uprisings in the border lowlands and escarpments, such as the desert Danakil, the Issa and the Raya Galla of the eastern escarpment who occasionnally go on the warpath after the harvest season.

554 625 701 The attitude of the common people who admire an individual hero but mock uniformed dandies, still persists, much to the annoyance of the uniformed police of the provincial towns, and of the soldiers. The non-uniformed "näc̣h lēbash" are far more respected, and their bravery is acknowledged.

178 631 3. Public Administration and Territorial Organization

The social structure supported by the pillars of traditional land tenure and feudal army organization, is maintained by a third pillar, public administration and the old territorial organization. However, all three are now in process of gradual, and uneven, transition, partly resembling analogous developments in Europe at the end of the feudal Middle Ages.

A. Rural Administration

622 Much as the hierarchical pyramid of land tenure and the old army of the Amhara rested on the broad back of the "gabbar", so does rural organization still rest ultimately on the broad base of the rural official known as "c̣heqa shum" (lit. appointee over the soil). He might be regarded as village headman, though in view of the residential pattern of scattered hamlets ("ṭis"), his area includes a collection of them, collectively known as "mändär" (village). This may coincide, in the old-Amhara provinces, with the church parishes known as "ānd debber agär".

Although appointed by the governor of the province, and supervised by the intermediate district chief ("woräda gäj", or "woräda shum", or "mislanē", i.e. governor's deputy, or lieutenant), the cheqa shum is regarded as the agent of the highest administrative power, formerly the "ras" of the province; or the king ("negus"); now the emperor. In thetraditional pattern

622 he has been able to accuse the governor himself when called before the uppermost ruler, e.g. after an unsuccessful rebellion, thus freeing himself from any involvement in the guilt. It is he who orders a crier 209 to proclaim the latest decrees of the emperor at the big marketplace within his area.

His function has been likened to those of an Elizabethan Justice of the peace, and there are indeed partial analogies. Among the duties of the c̣heqa shum are:

- Proclamation of imperial decrees; including call to arms in case of war;
- Officiating at weddings ("semanya", outside church) arranged between kin groups;
- Presiding over the village Council of Elders(chilot);
- Supervising local "gabbar" on their statute-labor and impressments;
- Aiding the "mislenē" in collection of taxes;
- Assisting the local priests in collection of dues on church lands;
- Estimating the fertility of land, in assessments of land tax;
- Mediating between landlord and tenant in case of disagreements (basing himself largely on local custom and unwritten law);
- Facilitating efforts of "näc̣h lēbash" police in pursuit of bandits (shefta);
- Arresting local criminals and bringing them before the "danya"(judge) at the nearest market

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center of town;

Acting as host to travelling officials and guests of the government (usually taking the supplies from local peasants);

Collecting government revenues on caravan trails passing through his area, especially import and export duties, and passing them on to the "nägadras" (lit. officer over commerce).

Assisting the "nägadras" in collection of various market dues, on honey, togas ("shamma"), sale of domestic animals, pottery, pepper, spices, etc., if sold at the formal market.

The c̣heqa shum is thus available for any additional services the central government wishes to apply to the grassroots of the population, and this perhaps explains why the position of the c̣heqa shum is the least changed of all traditional appointments to office.

He still receives no salary, but enjoys the traditional benefits of his office: Freedom from land tax; actual, though not legal near-freedom fromthe "asrat" produce tax; (he is freed from taxes because he is said to pay taxes "with his legs" in carrying out orders); withholding part of his collections; customary, though illegal, "kickbacks" from his activity in assessing land for taxes; small gifts for officiating at "semanya" weddings; rewards for arbitrating cases by retaining the "wager" of the loser; participating, with his household, in feasts arranged for passing government officials and

622 guests; small gifts from Muslim traders at the big market in his domain; etc.

It is still customary that a son of the cheqa shum be appointed to his father's post after him, unless there is some specific reason for deciding otherwise. Thus the c̣heqa shum has been a major stabilizing factor in Amhara history, surviving warlords, feudal families, rebel governors, provincial dynasties. When Menelik II conquered Galla lands, he found it useful to appoint similar village headman, "qoro", from among the Galla. The Italians, too, during their brief conquest, maintained the office of the c̣heqa shum, to avoid chaotic conditions, only occasional and tangential reference is made to the c̣heqa shum, which in practice confirms him in his customary role.

Since the c̣heqa shum usually owns land in his domain, sometimes a woman, sole survivor of the family, is appointed cheqa shum, especially if she is a generous donor to the local church and thus has a powerful ally. In this case she will hold her office in "honorary" capacity, appointing a man to represent her when making the tours and in dealings with menfolk. But she will usually not appoint her own husband, because their private property is regarded as potentially separate (e.g. in case of ultimate divorce).

631 As indicated before, several cheqa shum, of a half-district (yämeketl wäräda) or a district (wäräda) are supervised by their superior, the lieutenant of the governor, often called "mislanē". These district super-

631 visors are in turn responsible to the governors of the sub-province, the "awraja gaj". It is customary that these officials be appointed from provincial nobility, of the lower grades, and this custom is still followed in the old-Amhara provinces, though not in Shoa where the central government has managed to place officers with modern elementary school education regardless of commoner origin.

[622 554] Even the çheqa shum, who is always a commoner—though owner of freehold "rest" land—has a claim to being regarded as a "telleq saw", a great man, in the local social sphere. For the higher officials and absentee landlords know that their administration and territorial organization are ultimately dependant on him, and they refrain from undermining his authority.

B. Urban Organization

632 The word for "town", "kätäma", really means "permanent camp", and points directly to its origin in the feudal social organization. When a feudal lord (high level, e.g. a "ras") became attached to one place, and was at peace for any length of time, he would order a large church to be built, creating or enlarging a church parish. Trails leading there would expand into caravan routes, and a large and varied "Saturday market" would develop. This would attract Muslim or even Arab wholesalers, who would be segregated or segregate themselves

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Däbtära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the gheight of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture. [423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no one could "enclose" for private use. [415] It was called "addäbabay" or even "yähezb addäbabay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "nägadras", the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

632 566 Contact with feudal land tenure was maintained by requiring the "gultenña" of the district to come to town every three months, for a one-month statute labor, then called "wär tära", for the feudal lords now residing in town, if no war was in progress. Of course the actual labor was done largely by the "gabbar", but the gultenna was responsible. The domain of the feudal lord was called "_gezat_" (lit. acquisition, possession), and while this statute labor has now been abrogated, the term survives to mean "province".

632 692 The feudal chief of the province, imitating the king, would "sit in judgment" in Solomonic grandeur, usually twice a week, under a broad, shade-giving sycamore, in front of his"palace". The latter could range from a spacious tent to a stone house of round design in the ancient style (or a Portuguese-type castle of the 17th century). Surrounded by courtiers and would-be courtiers, eager to proclaim the boundless wisdom of the lord, he would also appoint smaller judges, "_danya_", to hear more toutine cases brought in from the countryside by the cheqa shum officials. The town thus became a place where even thesimplest peasant could, at least theoretically, seek relief from excessive opression. 625 The bodyguard of the lord of the town, commanded by a "shaläqa" (lit. chief over 1000 men), could detail his men for duty as "zebanya" watchmen, of specific spots, especially near the market, and this force thus formed a kind of city police.

000 Since the town attracted the most clever "däbtära",

632 [759] Since the town attracted the most clever "däbtära", many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or [265] coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. 632 648 588 Conversely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

632 little changed. Modern developments are merely super-
[178] imposed on this pattern, mostly due to recent decrees
633 of the central government at Addis Ababa. This city
had itself grown out of a modest village on top of Entoto mountain in the 1880's, when Menelik II transferred it to the hilly floodplain just below because the population flocking to his court soon after his early military victories had caused a severe fuel and water shortage on the hilltop. The fondness of the empress for the hot volcanic springs at the somewhat lower water table were another reason for the transfer.

The old title of "kantiba", mayor, was given only to those of most important urban centers, notably Addis Ababa and Gondar, and this traditinn has also been maintained. Although the mayors are now supervised by a young, modern-educated "Director of Municipalities" located in the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa, who may visit them or call them in for conferences and instructions, the appointment to "kantiba" is still made directly by the emperor.

[625] The urban chief of police is still called "ahalä-qa after the former title of the chief of bodyguard, and his subordinate officers are called "shambäl", the title used by Emperor Menelik II for the chidf of his most select bodyguard("zebaña") of 300 men.

The kantiba can convene a traditional council of elders, called "chilot" (now often referred to as "commissions", after the Italian occupation), which includes the chief of police and top judges, to hear and discuss

633 such modern problems as : increase in the number of hours of daily electricity; extension of city boundaries to include many scattered hamlets (e.g. of ethnic artisans) so as to be given to the rural "*näc̣h lēbash*" (thiefcatchers in white) with regard to the latest reawakening of an old family feud (*däm mälläsä*) that threatens bloodshed; to increase municipal tax revenues; what to do about accompanying official visitors, nosy foreigners, visiting dignitaries, etc.; whether to abandon the insect-infested olf prison or try to rebuild it; etc.

[643] Once or twice a year the emperor himself can be expected, with his retinue, requiring careful preparations and bringing much tension in advance to the urban officials. Sometimes he may address the people at large on the old "*yähezb addäbabay*", which must be marked out and cleared. If the town is also the provincial capital, the emperor can be expected to examine not only that office, but the heads of the sub-provinces, judges, elementary school, the provincial hospital; etc.

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798 Religious tolerance, decreed by the emperor, now permits such ethnoreligious minorities as the Muslims to reside wherever they please. In the past they were restricted to a section of the town, usually the part between the floodplain and the big market. For example, in the old city of Gondar, this section, locally called
633 "Addis Álăm" (lit. New world) was assigned them. Despite its name, this is the oldest section, and was probably named so over a century ago because it was newer than

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.
[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

563 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge,
624 regarded as their procvincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 In addition to being a center of public announce-
743 ments, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and
[731] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Aläm" (church of the "Savior of the

633 world", i.e. Jesus Christ), indicating the section of the town in which he lives.

C. Appointment to Office and Decision-Making.

566 The feudal social structure led almost invariably to paternalistic attitudes in appointment to office and in decision-making. This attitude continues in remote rural districts as well as in the most modern-appearing state offices in Addis Ababa.

661 644 The feudal lord, having conquered new lands, usually rewarded his most trusted followers with fiefs and connected privileges. For example, the newly-appointed "*mälkäña*", who may have previously served merely as military orderly to the warlord, as cupbearer and meatcarver, could be appointed to act as liaison officer and administrator of Galla lands, allocating 1/4 of the land to the old Galla "balbat" as "mälkäña" land of their own, and keeping the rest as his own fief. He would continue to make himself useful as tax-collector, foreman on statute-labor for the lord, as general spy for the ear of the Lord, available for any special service at any time. But he had little security of office or of land tenure, both being at the mercy of any caprice of the lord. It was therefore essential for him to spend much time at the court of the feudal lord, bowing and scraping, ever fearful that some competitor, perhaps the former "*läfāfi*" the herald who announced decrees and public inquiries,

661/644 might gain in favor and edge him out with contrived accusations.

This pattern can still be observed, from the modest court of the sub-provincial governor and local judge, to the palace courtyard of the emperor himself. It is called "däj ṭenāt" (lit. waiting by the gate). The frequency of appearance, in order to remain in good graces, is usually twice a week; more often if a special favor is sought. The place is preferably within a few yards [576] of a spot where the lord (or emperor) will pass. When this takes place, the courtier bows from the hips, very low. This will usually be acknowledged with a small nod. The procedure is considered essential by the aspirant for office, and by the office-holder, for these reasons:

Positive Reasons:

Reaffirmation of continued loyalty;

To indicate readiness to receive orders, pass messages, give information;

[576] To enable the lord to play his paternalistic role (i.e. the lord can and periodically does ask whether the courtier is happy in his job or wishes a new one; ettiquette requires a response of happiness at least for six months after having received a job, even if it was a demotion or an unpleasant task).

Negative Reasons:

To counteract rumors of disloyalty spread by rivals;

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this would almost certainly happen in case of repeated absences;

To prevent the ruler from forgetting, or to pretend having forgotten, a position of favor promised to the applicant. This follow-up also indicates tenacity, a positive point.

To keep the ruler from thinking that the office-holder has become so proud and independent that he has forgotten the "father" from whom all good things come.

To counteract plots being hatched in his absence, which would not benefit him.

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178 Another old requirement in appointment to office, which now is in force primarily in the district capitals and rural areas only, is the gift, "shum gänzäb" (lit. money for appointment), paid to the chief at the time of application.

Until very recently , the newly-appointed governor-general of a province would decree a "shum shir", a general, automatic abrogation of all office holdings left by the preceding regime; this enabled the new governor to appoint his own followers, courtiers, retainers, poor relations, etc., in office; but in practice he usually reappointed most of the former officials, down to the many "c̣heqa shum" headmen, on payment of an appropriate "shum gänzäb". In recent years this practice has been curtailed at the upper levels; for both the director-general of the province, and the secretary-general are now appointed by the central government in Addis Ababa.

661 178 But on lower levels the old practices continue, though more subtly and through indirect negotiations.

661 662 In decision-making, nothing seems to have changed. The paternalistic attitudes continue, and only very few of the modern-educated young aspirants really hope for and expect a modernization in the direction of greater efficiency. Only European advisors are outspoken on the subject, among themselves. Ethiopian students who return from university study abroad, return immediately to the "däj tenat" pattern. Twice a week they bow before the emperor as he leaves the High Court. Very kindly he greets them, usually by name, asks each after his well-being and that of his family. Later when a job has been assigned them, he asks whether they are satisfied, sometimes even inviting them to tell him if they are worried about something. The "father" role is taken literally on both sides.

Office-holders rarely make even petty decisions themselves. Instead, they take the matter to their superior, who is thus swamped with little details which waste his time. But it enables him to keep control through frequent personal contact and reaffirmation of the superordinate-subordinate relationship, and he in turn does "däj tenat" to his superior.

Office-seekers in the provincial capital maintain a grapevine service for information on the infrequent return of the governor-general from residence or "conferences" in Addis Ababa. Then they besiege his head-

661 642 quarters by the hundreds, employing messengers to spy out his daily movements and private life that might develop some entrance to him. They even do this when the job has already been given them by a lower officer, for the positive and negative reasons mentioned above. Court orders are usually unobtainable, even by such highly-placed officials as the modern-educated manager of the provincial branch of the State Bank of Ethiopia, without the personal intervention of the governor-general.

Both rural and urban administrations are considerably slowed by this pattern of appointments and decision making, but the old patterns of human relations, and values accompanying and often determining the social organization, can be expected to continue for some time in the future. In this case resistance to change seems complete.

D. The State and the Crown

643 The emperor, "*Negusä Nägäst* (lit. King of Kings, in the Geez language), used to be *primus inter pares*, one of several kings whom they had chosen as their superior, or whose military might left no doubt as to his supremacy. At present there is no "negus", and even the "ras" have lost their power together with their private armies. The monarchy thus reighs supreme, theoretically limited only by the voluntary Constitutions granted by

643 Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1931 and 1955.

His "Solomonic Dynasty" claims descent from the Biblical Queen of Sheba, known to Abyssinian tradition as "Makeda", or "Azeb", and her son, Menelik I. The proper reference to the emperor is "Aṭse", to the empress, "Itegē" (lit. Master, Mistress, i.e., of the country), used before the name. If no name follows the designation, the title "jan" is used (possibly from the Geez "däyyänä", he judges, or from the Cushitic "zehon", elephant, king of beasts). In address, the appellation used for the emperor is "Germawi hoy!" (Oh, Magnificence), formerly "Jan hoy!" (Oh, Elephant).

645 The Council of Elders, "chelot", referred to in village and town, also applies to the Crown Council of State. It consists, in addition to the emperor, of the Abuna, the archbishop of the State; those "ras" who have survived the centralization of recent years, notably the conservative kinsman of the emperor, Ras Kassa, and his liberal kinsman, Ras Imru; the powerful, reputedly chauvinistic, Minister of the Pen, Wolde Giyorgis; and several cabinet Ministers included more for decoration than expected contributions. Next to the emperor himself, this is the highest policy-making body at present, dominating, on important issues, the legislative, judicial and executive framework of the bicameral Parliament and cabinet. Serious problems discussed in the Crown

212 Council have ranged from disaffection in high places, to the question of whether or not the old Geez-Amharic alphabet of 276 and more syllables should be simplified

212 to facilitate the teaching of Amharic to non-Amharic Ethiopians, illiterates, and for typing.

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779 This latter change has not been made largely because of theopposition of the Abyssinian church. The Emperor is officially "Defender of the Faith". His connection with the church follows Old Testament patterns during the reigns of David and Solomon. The "tabot " (ark), which Emperor Menelik I supposedly spirited away from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem to its secret place at Aksum, is regarded as guarding the liberty of the countryto this day. Church and State are thus intimately connected, and when Mussolini threatened Ethiopia, the Emperor and his chieftains swore to defend the "tabot" with their lives. After liberation, the Coptic Abyssinian church was reaffirmed as the State church, though weakened in its temporal powers(esp. feudal land tenure). When the last link with Alexandria was severed a few years ago, the Abyssinian church became fully the established state church.

173 The traditional epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty", the book "Käbrä Nägäst", is still honored officially, and taken literally by the people. It contains an extension of the Biblical story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the court of King Solomon, and claims she conceived a son, Menelik I, the first Abyssinian ruler of the Solomonic Dynasty. The book may possibly date from the 13th century, justifying the resumption of this dynasty.

E. Administration and Tax Structure in Transition.

651 Imposition of tributes and taxes is the traditional yardstick by which the central power of Middle Eastern as well as African rulers has been measured, in their eyes and those of their subjects! On the basis of this yardstick the old Abyssinian rulers, even including the mighty Menelik II, enjoyed very little permanent central power, and their administrative decrees rarely outlasted their individual careers.

Repeated attempts have been made by the present ruler of Ethiopia to establish some uniform tax structure, replacing old feudal tributes. Some progress has been painfully made, but it seems that this particular phase of administration will long remain among the most change-resistent. Much of the tax system and enforcement can be described as chaotic, and this is particularly true in the proud, old Amhara provinces.

The first attempt of the central government to impose a direct tax on the individual citizen occurred in 1934, requiring every adult to pay a minimum of Eth$1.- per year, with income taxes as high as 20% on all cash salaries and feudal dues. The tax was highly unpopular, and hardly enforced. After return from exile, when his power was greater, the emperor resolved to take the administration of tax-collecting out of the hands of the provincial governors and to entrust the task to officials of the central Ministry of Finance. Collection houses of the central treasury, "*gemja byet*" were set up in

651 modern structures abandoned by the Italians in provincial capitals, were carefully guarded by military police, and placed in charge of treasury clerks from Addis Ababa who had a modern high school education. This form of administration continues at present.

The attempt was made by the central government, at about the same time (1942/1943) to set up a system for the land tax, based on fertility, which, it was hoped, would be more acceptable to the traditional-minded rural population. This tax was Eth$15.-for "*lämm*"(fat, i.e., fertile); Eth$10.-for semifertile ("*Lämm tyeff*"), and Eth$5.- for relatively poor but still usable agricultural land ("*ṭyeff*"); per "*gasha*" (80-100 acres). But the old-Amhara provinces resisted the measurement of their lands for this purpose, and in 1944 the amended decree permitted a different, lower,(older) rate of taxation, both in land tax and in produce tax ("*asrat*"), to apply to the old-Amhara provinces. Even this, however, is only partially enforced, snce it is difficult to collect from the more remote, mountainous, rural districts where the feudal kin groups and local churches jealously guard their old vested interests.[1] Moreover, the"Galla"clerks sent from Addis Ababa rarely dare to go far beyond the provincial capitals, leaving rural collections to the old "mislane".

As a result, the tax structure in the old-Amhara provinces is a medley of the old and the new, often in accordance with the distance from the provincial capital, Land rents and tithes still pass into and through

651 the hands of the feudal landlords, mostly in produce, though the new Education Tax is paid in cash. The sales tax on horses, mules, donkeys and cattle, collected at the big markets by the old "nägadras" is now supposed to be accumulated at the "gemja bet" of the provincial capital, to be forwarded to Addis Ababa once every month, sometimes after deduction of expenses incurred locally by the central government. The same procedure is followed with income taxes, which, in a provincial capital such as Gondar, are stated officially as averaging Eth$1.50 per taxpayer per year.

651 441 [494] The highest local income tax is paid by the local branch of the widespread trading company of Besse Co., which has a monopoly on gasoline sales, and does trucking, imports and wxports from the provinces, and which pays Eth$750.-per annum in Gondar, a very small percentage of its actual income. [505] The next-highest local taxpayer is Navigatana Co, formerly of Italian origin, which controls the diesel boats which monopolize modern traffic across Lake Ṭana. [494] The third-highest local taxpayer is an Arab wholesale merchant, who operates at irregular intervals in import, export, and trucking, westward to the Sudan and eastward to Eritrea, on the Italian-built roads.

651 But in the strictly rural, agricultural environment, tributes and taxes are still measured per "*madiga*" (lit. potful) of tyeff grain, received by the feudal landlord ("balbat") or landowning local church. The amounts are largely determined by local custom and tra-

651 dition; with fertility of soil, size of plot, size of
harvest in a given year, constituting merely secondary
651 considerations. For the tribute is regarded as payment
427 also for the right to squat on the land, to gather dead-
wood and cowdung for fuel, wood and nature-grown fibers
for utensils, pasture cattle and donkeys, build a hut,
use the water in the brook. Consequently, a greedy
landlord parcels out his land in smallest possible plots,
to receive as much profit as possible, and he is aided
and abetted in this by the poor tenants who are so jeal-
ous of each other that they complain if their neighbor-
ing tenant has been granted more land than he can farm
without servants. The tribute for such a minimum plot
to the landlord thus takes the form of a "quitrent"
(now that the statute-labor has been abrogated official-
ly, though not always actually):

1 madiga of grain (usually tyeff), referred to as "amsho"

plus 1/2 madiga of "qolo" (usually barley, for roasted condiments or beer-making).

651 439 Only in export duties and import tariffs does the central government have full control. Export taxes, ranging usually from 28 - 50% on coffee, the major valuable export, are levied and collected by the Ministry of Finance. This product comes from the southwest, Jimma sub-province, or Harar, in the southeast, both areas conquered by Menelik II from the Galla, and therefore under more unchallenged central administration.

651 439 Import duties are collected on the relatively limited routes of access to the country, e.g. on cotton sheeting, and on modern "luxury" items imported for Europeans in Addis Ababa.

202 Communications were recognized by both Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie I as one of the foremost bottlenecks. At the turn of the present century and in some areas even later, messages and orders from and to provincial administrators were still carried by the traditional runner on horseback, carrying the message wedged in the top of a cleft stick, which assured safe conduct even through valleys dominated by bandits. 206 Menelik II introduced telegraph and telephone service at least to the major provincial capitals, and this has been improved since, though the rural district headquarters often still are without either form of modern communication, not to speak of the rural hinterland.

631 Provincial administration can be summarized as
635 follows:

Table 6: The New, Centralized, Provincial Administration.

Location:	Administrator:	Staff:	
Provincial Capital-urban-center of province.	"ṭäqlay gäj" (Governor-general) appoints lower office-holders;often absent,at court of Emperor.	Director-General, appointed by cent. govt.; always in residence.	Secretary-general "wana ṭsähafi" appointed by central govt.;always in residence.Does most of routine adminis.
Administers mostly from provincial capital	"awraja gäj" governor of sub-province (e.g. 6 in Begemdir province) Appointed by Governor-general.	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"woräda gäj",district chief. (24 in Begemdir province)sometimes old "mislanĕ".Appointed by Governor-general	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"yämeketl woräda gäj" chief of about 1/10 of the district.(255 in Begemdir province). Position must be confirmed by Governor-general, through "däj tenat"	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from own village.	"cheqa shum" headman of"mändär", or "ānd debber agär".Confirmed by Governor-general.	Can improvise unpaid staff.	

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It is noteworthy that in this structure the Governor-general of the province is the only administrator permitted to appoint the next two highest officers of his own staff (since 1942). This is in line with the consistent development since 1916, when the present emperor, then regent, began the process of sweeping away the power of the top of the feudal-provincial pyramid. The "ras" gradually lost their private armies, and were expressly forbidden, by decree in 1942, to make treaties between provinces regarding boundaries or political or military matters.

[648] Contact with foreigners was also taken out of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor-general of the province, since foreigners going to the provinces require permits issued by the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa; these permits have to presented to the provincial administrators before local travel is allowed . Even the control over the "Kantiba", the mayors of the major towns, was taken from the Governor-general of the province, and invested, by decree of 1942, in the "Director of Municipalities" in the Ministry of Interior. This central control over municipalities was evident in 1953, when mayors were called to Addis Ababa by the Director of Municipalities, for a reprimand from the emperor for having permitted his boarding establishments at elementary schools, intended for war orphans, to become filled with the sons of well-to-do feudal nobility.

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The feudal nobility, though much less powerful than in the past, plays a more informal, but still

631 565 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the "awraja gäj" and "worāda" chiefs are from medium and lower provincial nobility. 646 565 In Addis Ababa, the "Senate" or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility, the "*Mäkwonent*", while the Deputies of the Lower House are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa areas.

643 631 178 565 Many special privileges of regional nobility have been abrogated by the present Emperor: The *Wag Shum*", hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by him; also the "*Behēr Nagash*",the"King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopien dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the ċheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

671 pretation of the part of the judge; and that they make no sharp distinctions between civil and criminal legal procedures--perhaps because both cases are considered equally disturbing to the society.

A. Abyssinian Law Codes.

The legal patterns of behavior that one can observe in actual practice seem often based on considerations of an unwritten kinship common law reminiscent of the Arab bedouin; at other times of the prestige-power of medieval feudal lords or of African chiefs who "can do no wrong". This pattern was probably little challenged until the 13th century A.D., when the power of the church increased so vastly with the resumption of power of the "Solomonic Dynasty". The earlier pattern was one of absolute power, quick decisions, swift punishment, Much of it remained until the 20th century, and, in remote old-Amhara areas, to this day. It is referred to as "Säbawi heg" (Man-made Law).

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627 To this older, unwritten code belongs the practice of "blood money", payable to the kinfolk of the murder victim, provided they are willing to accept payment in place of bloody revenge. A weaker kin group usually accepts, but a stronger would be ashamed to take money in place of a life, and resulting feuds, taking dozens of lives, have been known to continue for half a century in remote rural areas. The old price used to be the "semanya" (lit. 80, i.e. 80 Maria Theresa Thalers), as much as a common man could be expected to

671 [627] accumulate in a lifetime. The present price is usually Eth$1000.-.

[698] This practice is so strong that even at present a judge of a semi-modern court in Addis Ababa will suspend a prison sentence for involuntary manslaughter on condition that the murderer accumulate this sum and pay it to the victim's kinfolk--a wise decision preventing a new chain of murders. Recently a uniformed policeman in Addis Ababa, who was under this sentence for just that crime, made his tour among resident Europeans in the business district, begging money, with a letter in English explaining his need, signed by his own superior officer!

635 692 The absolute powers of the "ras" or "negus" in the past were limited only by the geographical boundaries of their effective military and administrative realms. All of them sat in judgment of their subjects, and combined legislative, judicial and executive powers in their persons. But each subject had the right to appeal directly to this highest authority against unjust treatment by a lower officer, provided he could throw himself in the path of the ruler and catch his attention. This right to "abyēt" ("Hear me") continues to this day.

697 Nearly all "ras" and "negus" of the past maintained political prisons for their noble relatives who might become contenders to the throne. These prisons were not walled, but located on inaccessible mountain tops, "amba", and sometimes referred to as "wäheni". One such "wäheni" was located at a place called Geshan, in the old, smaller, Begémdir district, and was used by the kings of Gondar

697 from the 16th-17th centuries. When this area, which had been a sort of frontier area, became too settled, the political prison was transferred farther northwest to the edge of the escarpment leading down to the Sudan, between Chelga and Metemma.

671 175 779 A formal, written law code was superimposed on the earlier unwritten one in the 13th century, when the Abyssinian church extended its ecclesiastical code to cover also the temporal judicial behavior of lords as well as commoners, in all phases of life. This is referred to as "yëbaherya heg" (lit. the Law from Overseas), regarded as including "Moral Law" (i.e.Church Law).

This code, called the "Fetha Nägäst"(Law of the Kings) was basically derived from Roman Canon Law of Constantine, formulated at the Coptic Synod in Egypt in the 9th and 10th centuries, then translated in 1239, by Al-Safi Abu Al-Fada'il, into the Arabic language which the Copts of Egypt had by that time adopted for their own worship also. The code was a blend of Canons of the Coptic church councils, the Justinian Code, and theBible.

It was brought to Abyssinia during the reign of King Zera-Yaqob, and translated into Geez, then in its final stages as a spoken language, by the Abyssinian priest Petros Gäbre-Egzer. The Fetha Nägäst" became the official supreme law of the land when Bishop Takla-Haymanot resurrected the "Solomonic Dynasty" about that time. Of course the Abyssinian church officially believes that the "Fetha Nägäst" is much older, and that it has never been altered.

671 779 The Code consists of 51 chapters, of which 22 deal with

671/church rules and 29 with civil and criminal law, without 779/any distinctions between these categories:

Table 7: The Old Abyssinian Law Code: Civil-Criminal and Ecclesiastical Content.

Ecclesiastical Content:	Civil-Criminal Content:
Duties of the Church	The Sick
Divine Literature	Food, Clothing, Dwelling, Occupations, suitable for the faithful.
Christening	
Patriarchs, Bishops, Priesthood	Marriage, Dowry; Prohibition of Concubinage
Deaconship and Under-Deaconship	
Commandments for all Believers	Loans free from interest; Mortgage; Bail
The Confession of Faith	Deposit; Power of Attorney
Circumcision and other Religious customs	Liberty; Slavery; Emancipation
Monks and Nuns	Guardianship
Martyrs; Confessors; Renegades	Society; Community of the faithful
Mass;Eucharist;Prayer;Fasting	Constraining a Person by Force
Endowments and Pious Foundations	Lost and Disappeared Property
The Holy Days	
Alms	Judge and Witnesses
The Tithe; First Fruits	Worshippers; Blasphemers; Sorcerers; Murderers
Administration and Income of the Church.	
	Thieves; Brunkards; Usurer
	The Disobedient Son
	Sexual Relations
	The Abused
	Tenancy and Land Serfdom
	The Will and Inheritance
	Public Roads; Plots; Buildings; Water.

671 Despite its apparent and proclaimed orthodoxy, occasional amendments, either in theory or practice or both, have been made through royal decrees or common-law [588] usage. For example, concubinage has long been practiced, sometimes in the form of "dämoz" marriage, which evades the Fetha Nagast by giving the woman the status of "hired servant" receiving a periodic "wage", and in this form the practice is at present legally recognized even in the new, modern laws decreed by the present emperor.

In fact, the "Fetha Nägäst" contains an "elastic clause", which has been rediscovered under the present regime, and is cited as justification for the new, European-patterned laws which upset the ultra-conservatives. This clause advises: "Act according to your observation of the conditions of times and seasons". This was quoted in the new Penal Code of 1930.

681 However, in the past, the draconic aspects of the criminal law in particular were most literally interpreted by many kin chiefs and feudal lords up to the beginning of the present emperor's regime. The hand of a thief was cut off, and in case of armed robbery both a hand and a foot. Rebels were similarly punished. If a person took the usual oath, "by the life of the King" and was found to have perjured himself, his tongue could be cut out. An insult to the king could be punished by [593 567] blinding. A father had the right of life and death over his children--but not over his Christianized slaves. The latter were further protected against being sold, the penalty for which offense could be the hanging of the master.

681 master. Such verdicts were still carried out during the reign of Emperor Menelik II who died in 1913, though he tried to reduce the literal enforcement of the more draconic parts of the Code.

It is noteworthy that the application of the "Fetha Nägäst" was supposed to be based on the biblical principle of Luke, that punishment should be applied according to the knowledge of the offender, not according to the seriousness of the offense. This was reaffirmed in the Penal Code of 1930 (though in effect this new code abrogated much else of the Fetha Nägäst), as follows:

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692 The following are degrees of relative culpability, in accordance with which degrees of punishment are to be determined on a declining scale:

The man who knows the law
the forgetful person (unstable personality)
the "balagär" (rustic peasant)
the (otherworldly) monk
the poor and ignorant person (illiterates)
the stranger
the ignorant woman
the imbecile or invalid
the Ethiopian from a non-Amharic-speaking province
the child below age 12.

The judge was also permitted and encouraged to take the emotional personality of the offender into consideration(without indicated scale) , such as:

The oppressive person
the lawless
the proud
the envious
the treacherous
the revengeful
the intemperate
the quarrelsome
the careless
the bullying

671 696 The intent of these guiding principles and definitions were to aid the judge to arrive at a just verdict, preferably a "Solomonic" one. Guides were considered desirable, perhaps due to the absence of the principle of any law of precedence. The emphasis was on the "Code", and this was reinforced by the culture pattern of "literalness", in behavior.

In effect, however, these guides have enabled both draconic or bribed (and therefore lenient) judges to interpret the law with considerable subjectivity. Clever talkers-in-court never fail to use their ability to sway the public audience, which usually has a tremendous effect on the judge.

671 777 The effect of the "Fetha Nägäst" was to link the church and state. There were usually 12 provincial chief justices, "wombär", in allusion, apparently, to the 12 apostles. The "Fetha Nägäst" ruled all marriage, even 586 684 the non-ecclesiastical "semanya" marriage outside the church premises. Divorce proceedings in the old-Amhara areas still can be carried through only with agreement of the "*mänfäs agway*", the soul-confessor, one of the priests of the parish, although no divorce is possible in a church marriage.

This "mänfäs agway" receives a small salary from the state; he can summon local state police if the accused mate has refused to appear, to bring him by force. If the divorce is granted, the "mänfäs agway" usually sentences both mates to a fine of Eth.$5.- payable to him, on the grounds that both are technically lawbreakers for

586 684 having "torn the marriage agreement". Furthermore, the woman can bring religious pressure to bear on the "mänfäs agway" if he hesitates in granting the divorce, by publicly ripping off her blue neckcord, the "mätäb", symbol of Christianity, thus threatening to run off to the Muslims because her mistreatment has become completely unendurable. Since the "Fetha Nägäst" also covers Guardianship, the "mānfäs agway" decides to whom children of a broken marriage are to be assigned: usually children under 7 years of age go to the mother, but an older child may be asked to indicate a choice. Boys over 10 usually are given to the father.

671 The new law codes of Emperor Haile Selassie I are patterned after European, modern codes and are in the process of more comprehensive codification at present. What has been done so far will be described later.

675 B. Contracts, Oath, and the Legal Person, in Abyssinian Traditinnal Law.

A contract, called "kedan" (the same word is used for "Testament" in Biblical reference), does not have to be written, and usually is not. But it must be witnessed, preferably by more than one reliable person, preferably male. The contracting parties formally announce their agreement, then touch their palms lightly, 428 (ej mätta). If the contract is a last will and testament, the Confessor ("mänfäs agway") holds the thumb of the testator while the will is formally spoken aloud.

695 The traditional oath, "May the ruler die" (If I lie), is still in full use. This oath is called "semanya". As mentioned above, perjury was once a very serious offense, even a capital one, later was penalized by substitution of "blood money", i.e. 80 Thalers fine. Until recently, provincial farmers still invoked the name of the head of their old provincial dynasty in this oath, the "ras", or the name of the long-dead Menelik II. Since 1941, however, the name of the present emperor is [643] universally used, "Haile Selassie yemut". It is in a very real sense a form of acknowledgement of the supreme power of the ruler, whose supreme power over and above the feudal system is regarded, traditionally, as a protection from chaos, lawlessness and uprisings that destroy and cause suffering. The proverb says:

[539] "When the emperor dies,
with whom will there be judging?".

The oath "Haile Selassie yemut" is used also to arrest lawbreakers, much as English police might arrest "in the name of the king".

672 Another old legal tradition still in full force is that of the "wās", the personal guarantor. To obtain a loan or a job, the applicant must always present at least one reputable guarantor, who is then personally responsible for making up any default or damage or misbehavior, and who can even be jailed in case the culprit escapes. He acts as personal bondsman for a defendant, to avoid his being held for trial in jail. This "wās"

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely
567 672 useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not legal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

C. Judicial Personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yäqälatē danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagalye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Hayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

693 If the quarrel is a civil matter, the curbstone
694 judge usually acts merely as arbitrator ("aqorañ"). He is rewarded by the loser, who has forfeited his "wager", usually with several "berellē" (glass bottles) of beer.

If, however, personal injury or some other criminal matter seems involved, or if no mutually satisfactory adjustment can be reached, the arbitrator may tie their togas together with a knot, and refer the matter to the c̣heqa shum.

693 The latter then sits as informal judge, to decide
622 whether the matter should be referred to a regular formal judge, the "danya". Meanwhile he tries to arbitrate the case, with the power of his office as village headman lending him added prestige. In church-owned territory he may be a priest. Sometimes he is one of the local Confessors ("mänfäs agway"), particularly if it is a marital quarrel. Each of these offices lends the cheqa shum added prestige, for there is no formal sep-
[779] aration of church and state organization at the base of the social pyramid.

693 (2) The Indicting, Examining Judge. He is cal-
694 led "ẹtbiya danya" (lit. handwashing judge), and his functions are broad, and vary between rural and town locale and between districts and regions. Sometimes the cheqa shum performs this function himself. In town, the ẹtbiya danya may sit under a sycamore at the market, so that any tradesman or purchaser can complain to him about unfair weights or attempted theft. He can issue an immediate "feten," an injunction to cease and desist.

693 694 He can summon an offender for later, formal trial before the "danya", and can also summon witnesses to appear. He can order the market police to arrest offenders, or fine them on the spot (up to Eth$25.-). His position somewhat resembles the Arab Bedouin Arifa local judge.[75]

693 In recent years, the "aṭbiya danya" is sometimes a very young man who is semi-educated, graduate of an 8-year modern elementary school of the provincial capital, who is familiar, or expected to be, with all the latest decrees of the emperor. He thus becomes an "agent of change". But since he has never lived outside the province, he still follows the old pattern of literal interpretation of decrees, with little or vague awareness of thespirit or intent of the new laws. Often he is overzealous, with the brashness of an adolescent promoting half-understood modernization, which annoys or amuses the older, often less modern-educated "danya". Sometimes he functions as police magistrate.

(3) The formal Judge, "dānya". The threat of legal prosecution, "bädanya fit"(before the judge) is often heard in ordinary quarrels, which, however, rarely get this far. The "danya" is appointed by the "awraja shum", the administrative head of the sub-province, in most cases, and he now receives a modest salary. Formerly his income was entirely dependent on the "wagers" placed by plaintiff and defendant, which they had to enter in order to have their case heard at all, and which

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[75] Bouvat, L.: Le Droit Coutumier des Tribus Bedouines de Syrie. Revue du Monde Musulman, 1921. Tome 43, pp.27-45.

693 was forfeited by the loser. Under the old system a poor man who could not, even with the aid of kinsmen, raise his bet to equal that of his richer opponent, had little recourse to justice except the "abyet".

[661] The old system also left wide opportunities for bribing of judges, for the borderline between a public "wager" and private bribe was thin. In rural areas the pattern of "wager" still persists. But most danya now officiate in the towns, in a "ferd-byēt" (lit. Judgment-House), often an Italian-built administrative building; and the court procedure has taken on a more modern pattern, through the gradual effect of the pressure in this [68I] direction from Addis Ababa. His fines may range from Eth$25.- to Eth$500.-; prison sentences from one month to one year.

The "danya" is a regular judge in that he sits in judgment all year long, at regular intervals. Wednesdays and Fridays are preferred, because they are light "fast-days", on which the "mind is not weighted down with food", according to the traditinnal attitude. Thus, time and place and frequency of function of the "danya" are formally established in the judicial structure, and form the broad base of this part of social organization.

(4) The Appeals Judge, "wombär" (or, "wänbär", or "wänbär", lit. seat), does not sit as regularly in the "ferd-byet". Several times a year (at least once) he travels on a judicial circuit, and also accompanies the governor-general on his inspection tours. Tradi-

693 tionally the country of Abyssinia had 12 wombär, possibly in allusion to the 12 apostles (as in the "mähabbär" sodality). In the past the wombar were appointed by the "ras" or the"negus". At present they are still usually appointed by the governor-general of the province, who is their immediate superior, and whom they besiege in "daj tenat" for this high office. The old "ras" or "negus" usually had two wombar sit at each side of the throne, but the one sitting at the lord's right, the "qäñ wombär", outranked the one sitting at his left ("gera wombär"). This seniority in seating is still followed at the court of the modern-attired governor-general. The latter usually reappoints new wombar when he is himself assigned to another province, and since the wombar resides in the provincial capital, he is a permanent part of his official retinue during his tour of office there.

The wombar usually goes on circuit after the main harvest, and "sits" at major market towns to hear appeals. Formerly, the provincial "ras" would sit under the old fig tree, flanked by his wombars, and hold court even on capital punishment cases. The latter are now referred [681] to Addis Ababa, to the High Court. But the wombar is now empowered to assess damages or fines up to Eth$2000.-, to pass prison sentences up to 5 years, and lashes up to 25 (the latter usually in assault cases).

694 Though the principle of "habeas corpus" did not exist in the traditional law, kinfolk of the accused being held by a danya a long time without trial could go to the wombär's court in the town he resided in, and by

694 appearing regularly, early and late, for many days, bowing before him in "dǎj tenat", call his attention to the injustice, whereupon he would usually order the negligent or wicked danya to produce the prisoner and to explain the evidence against him. But a prisoner without the protection of kinfolk or of priests of the church, who could intercede in this fashion, was in a helpless situation. This in part explains the continuing emphasis on and power of kinship relationships and of the church, in all phases of life and social organization.

692 (5) The High Court of the central government, in Addis Ababa, combines the features of the traditional private court of the king, sometimes called "chelot" (Council), and of a modern Supreme Court. Nowadays, several of the judges are European jurists of considerable experience. Capital punishment cases, e.g. murder, slave trading, armed banditry, are heard before this court, since thr right to capital punishment has been taken from the "ras". This court is public or semi-public, and its decisions are often publicly announced. However, there is also a secret "Crown Council" (also called "chelot"), which convenes at the invitation and order of the emperor, usually on state matters affecting the monarchy, such as cases of treason.

D. Traditional Methods of Investigation of Crimes.

694 [789] Two factors are noteworthy in the traditional method of investigating crimes. One is the use of the supernatural in tracing the criminal's trail; the other is participation of the Coptic church, once the suspect is caught. While recent, modern instructions from the central government try to suppress the former, neither factor has lost much of its power over the attitudes and beliefs of nearly all rural Amhara, even townspeople.

625 691 a) The thiefcatcher, "lēbashay", recently outlawed officially, was a hereditary office, passed from father to son, thus entrusted only to Amhara (or other Abyssinian Branches). This inheritance, however, much like inheritance of f eudal fief ("gult"), had to be re-acknowledged in every generation. The heir, grown to maturity, would take his father's medicine bag, "korojo", travel to the head "lebashay" at the capital (of the province or country), and request renewal of license. This license could be withdrawn at any time, on complaints from the local headman, the çheqa shum, that the thiefcatcher had become corrupt, e.g. that he was in league with thieves and was so unsuccessful that he must be using fake medicine.

789 694 The magic involved in the procedure was "sympathetic magic", for the effort made was one of acting out all of the movements of the thief, from re-enactment of the crime itself, on the spot where it was committed, tracing his trail of flight, eating where he ate, and even resting in a state of sleep to indicate when and

789 where the thief had slept, until he was caught.

694 The thiefcatcher directed this procedure, but did not drug himself. For that puppose he selected a boy about the age of a deacon, i.e. 10 to 15, for it was believed that puberty spoiled the sensitivity and "unblemished innocence" of the boy. This boy was never taught the secret of his power. Often he was a young slave (more recently ex-slave), who had been selected on account of his particular suggestibility. It was be- [278] lieved that years of this repeated drugging made him a permanent addict, slowed his mental functions and even sent him occasionally into raving fits; so that a person who had served as "tracer" for the lebashay could not be a witness in court.

When complaint of a theft reached the lēbashay from within his "territory", he went to the c̣heqa shum or other local administrative official, and asked permission to begin his investigation. Together, they as well as the local "aṭbiya danya" judge and witnesses (if it was grand larceny) went to the place where the crime had been committed. The boy, young enough never to have had manly sexual intercourse with a woman, was now given the drug to drink. The lēbashay tied the boy's waist with a girdle, leaving 3 to 4 yards hanging down, (to be used later to maintain control like a chain in curbing a dog).

The boy was now given a hornful of milk to drink, in which a black powder from the medicine bag had been dissolved. It did not take long before the boy began

789 to make jerky motions, increasing in speed, acting "hot
694 on the trail", whereupon the lēbashay seized the loose end of the girdle. The boy pulled in one direction, and the group followed. When he entered a house, he re-enacted the activities of the thief in complete detail, including sleeping in his bed, until the lebashay prodded him to "awake" and continue the trail, saying 3 times "aderas" (get going, arrive). The boy jumped up, roughly pushed anyone in his way regardless of the normal respectful etiquette of behavior toward a"great man", and continued the chase. When he entered a hamlet or compound, everyone had to "sit", no one could leave. The boy would approach every individual, make magic contact with him by pushing him with the knee (regarded as the seat of manly power). If he seemed distracted, the lebashay might slap the boy, much as one would an unruly dog. In crossing brooks, the boy was carried across, since water was believed to draw away the power from the medicine, making him lose his "scent". If water did inadvertently splash on him, another boy had to be drugged to continue the trail. Lemons were also believed to affect the power of the medicine.

685 When the thief was found, and confessed, he had
696 to pay the fee of the lebashay, fixed during Emperor Menelik II restraining laws to a maximum of Eth$6.-; the thief also was to post two personal guarantors to guarantee that he would return the stolen item and appear in court. The lēbashay could decide to accept these conditions and release him, or turn him over to

685 696 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 789 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara ~~scribe~~.

694 787 When all methods of detection have failed, the distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "*ṭänkwa*", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense [754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "*säbätē masdäfat*", on the thief.

171 694 The pattern of the *lēbashay* has been traced by some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thiefseeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

694 (b) Collective arrest, "afärsata" was officially 672 discontinued only furing the past decade, and may well be re-established in any local emergency. It is usually applied only in cases of murder. The district administrator or governor could order the judges to arrest an area, then fence in all the men, and decree that "not a cow be milked nor a baby suckled", in the traditional phrase, until the investigation is completed. Every person was interrogated individually, and made to swear, before priests brought from the Coptic church, the oath of excommunication, "aggäzazät": "May He (i.e. God), perforate me as the Cross" ("endä mäsqälu yebäsasañ"), if thefull truth be withheld.

When the culprit finally confessed, due to the tremendous social pressure on him, he was chained and sometimes thrown into a dungeon until trial. The cheqa shum was made responsible for guarding him, and could be assessed heavy damages, even full blood-money, if the murderer escaped. If the murderer was not found, the entire hamlet or territory under collective arrest could be sentenced to pay the "blood-money", unless they could prove that the murderer must have been a "passing bandit". Even then the çheqa shum might be fined for not having been watchful enough. At present he is somewhat relieved from this duty by the local officer, a semi-feudal "farasanne", whose only job is to look out for bandits and prevent anyone from shooting off his rifle, lest a bloody feud break out and everyone become trigger-happy. This 625 is in rural areas. In towns, the police, uniformed in

625 khaki shorts and with shoes, are now made responsible for guarding the peace.

E. Litigation

691 The Amhara, especially the male, is trained not to suffer any injustice silently (unless temporarily powerless before a "great man"). No matter how lowly his socio-economic class status, he loves to engage in litigation. Observers have sometimes described it as a national pastime. Even children at play argue (fictional) cases, with enthusiasm, debating their cause before their own "judges", draping and undraping a rag from their shoulders, much like adults do their toga, in this activity.

A man is proud to be regarded as one who "speaks [693] well in court". Therefore, he will be ashamed to let another speak for him, and the legal profession flourishes only in Addis Ababa before modern courts, in which modern laws are involved, using European (Greek, Armenican, etc.) lawyers. However, a woman or a timid man, or a timid ex-slave could hire a man who "speaks well in court".

This debate is followed in both civil and criminal cases, before the "danya" or "wombär", and every individual involved, including the gurarantor "(was"), çheqa shum, lēbashay, etc., have an op,ortunity to argue as well as testify.

691 Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wäsän gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

[579] More serious is the loss incurred from the outlew bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled to the bush). [685] The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendent he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

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701 Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser, or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the em-

695 701 broidered edge of the Shamma toward the face of the accused, or even toward the face of the judge; shouting, in the latter case: "May He (God) make you see clearly! (Egziabhēr yasaywo). While he waves his right hand forward, his right foot thunders forward also, maintaining his position by leaning on the staff with his left arm. Meanwhile, the adversary leans mutely on his staff, as if he were in church leaning quietly on his "maqomya", but indicated nonchalance and indifference toward the raving of the accuser. A method of the defendant to influence the judge with his sincerity, in the traditional way, is to throw his pre-arranged toga off his shoulders, baring them in the middle of arguing his defense, to indicate that he surrenders his shoulders to the flogging that the judge might order, in complete confidence that his innocence must be evident to the judge.

695 661 Until very recently, and in remote rural districts even today, the wager, or bet on the outcome, was an essential factor in legislation. It took the place of court fees, for the loser forfeited his bet to the judge. This was the salary of the judge. Without this wager, it was not possible to go to court. The poor man was at a great disadvantage since he could not, even with help of his kinsmen, keep raising the bets to equal those of his wealthier adversary. To limit such judicial excesses, Emperor Menelik II decreed that wagers had to consist of tangible items such as honey, horse, mule, with a fixed cash equivalent (Eth$1.-, $10.-,$20.- in this order), and judges were urged to exercise fairness. Prohibition

of the practice now often leads to more secret and subtle bribing of the judge. For the old wager was open to the public, and a great source of public recreation and entertainment, accompanied by great noise and flashes of wit.

The danya would gravely enter every wager in his register. While the case was in progress, bets could be raised by signalling from the audience (partly consisting of interested kinfolk) instead of shouting them out, which was not always preferred:

"I agree to be his guarantor" - point finger at accused and strike own breast;

"I bet honey against him" -point finger at adversary and lick palm;

"I bet a horse" - wave both extended hands as if gallopping;

"I bet a mule" - hold hands near ear, moving up and down.

The judge had to take into consideration not only the winnings he would take, or the secret reward from the winner of the case, but also the shifting views of the audience. Thus the participating, arguing audience formed a sort of informal jury. Sometimes the danya might actually recess the court and call upon several elders from the audience to consult privately with him, or to help him assess the amount of damages to be awarded.

If dissatisfied with the outcome of the case, the loser might shout his protest "yegban" (lit. enter me, i.e. on another trial), usually taking it to a high-

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661 er court, if he felt he had the means. In this case the judge might sometimes not appropriate the wager for fear of having to surrender it again later.

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691 There are numerous proverbs characterizing roles in litigation, and counseling behavior and decisions to be made in certain situations:

"The young lawyer,
in the beginning he acclaims to heaven;
later on, he will look to the ground"

(Moral: always choose an old, experienced lawyer, with many reserve tricks up his sleeve).

"Don't seize the tail of the leopard;
but if you did, don't let go."

(Meaning: Don't go to court against a good talker, or "great man", or wealthy adversary; but once started, fight as hard as hard as you can, or else he will ruin you).

"Even if you know how,
against the judge do not debate".
"Judge, why your partiality?
the loser must pay you (anyway)".

"One witness need not make you tremble,
(just as) a one-eyed (person)cannot dance well."

[171] The pattern of the wager resembles, in part, that of the "khabdh" of Arab bedouin.[76]

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[76] Ibid.

F. Law and Justice in Transition.

178 671 Emperor Menelik II had tried to limit what Europeans considered draconic penalties and procedures. Emperor Haile Selassie I continued to adjust tribal law to modern conditions, and, as his power increased, expressed the principle, in the Penal Code of 1935: "By learning European practice, (the people) may attain to higher degrees of knowledge, because the basis of our code of laws in many places fits with the European code". Both emperors, while introducing modern acculturation in law and justice, quite consciously, did not, it is clear, abrogate the old tradition. They could not have done so in practice, despite the growing power of the central monarchy. For the traditional values and attitudes, particularly among the Amhara, are still largely intact.

The transitinn can be analyzed as proceeding in four phases: (a) The abrogation of draconic penalties and procedures; (b) continuing customary law and justice, (officially and unofficially); (c) Modernization from the top down; (d) Sectarian privileges to resident minorities.

681 178 671 (a) During the reign of Menelik II enforcement of the old draconic penalties continued. The hand of a thief was cut off, and he was thereafter called "dush" (lit. stump). Cattle rustlers, "dandä", were punished the same way. It was not rare to see mutilated persons, hand or foot or both, in those days. It was not until the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I that the Penal Code of 1930 could have been decreed and enforced.

681 178 671 According to this change, mutilation of thieves was forbidden; the chaining of debtor to creditor was abrogated; flogging was reduced in frequency and quantity; the area that could fall under collective arrest, "afärsata", was limited; the legal validity of evidence from the "lebāshay" was indirectly abrogated. In 1933, the emperor further limited days, hours, and distances of the "afärsata". Capital punishment had been centralized in 1930.

It is noteworthy that in several cases old practices were for the first time acknowledged in writing, despite the continuing hesitancy to admit publicly any practice that European observers might regard as primitive. Thus, blood-money in place of blood-feud was decreed legal in 1930 .

426 671 178 Liberalization was also legalized by regarding civil law. In 1923 the Law of Loans fixed maximum interest at 9%. As usual , this was found to be too far a departure from practice for enforcement, and it was later raised to 12%. One of the last decrees prior to Italian hostilities, provided, in May 1935, for the abrogation of statute-labor, permitting the tenant (gabbar) to make a small payment (resembling a quitrent) instead.

694 661 178 (b) The pattern of judges riding circuit continued unabated, from the end of the harvest in the month of Tahsas (about November) until Easter. Sometimes judicial councils, "*gubaē*" were available in towns for appeals. But the old custom of bringing a gift to the "great man" to interest him in the indivi-

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often [661] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus- 178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards, and now is losing evan the right to beg and to create a traffic hazard by throwing himself before the vehicle of [171] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 671 643 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid. One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in practice, this amounts to little more than rationalization for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles. 693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the King), who traditionally was the guardian of theFatha Nägäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm, trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

693 and thus not a contender for the throne. He was the chief justice, for he could hear appeals even from the highest court in the land, and act as arbitrator and judge in high-level quarrels between feudal lords and even involving the king himself. His role as chief counselor of the king has now been taken by the "Tsahafi" (lit. scribe), who has risen to that position from that of long-time private secretary, at present Wolda-Giyorgis.

692 The present High Court has original and appellate jurisdiction over all cases in Ethiopia, criminal as well as civil. Majority opinion of the judges prevails. In 1942 a Supreme Imperial Court was appointed to hear appeals from the High Court, but it convenes only intermittently. A secret Crown Court is called together in special treason cases affecting the old nobility, or the officers of the new army.

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177 A new Civil Law Code is still being worked out, by a series of European jurists invited for that purpose. Meanwhile new decrees are published intermittently in the official "Negarit Gazeta" (lit. the drum gazette), in both Amharic and English. The Attorney-General is a foreigner (for some time Mr. Nathan Marein), but the Minister of Justice, the Legislative Consultative Committee and the President of the High Court are Ethiopians, with a range of modern education from very little to average.

642 The Constitution of 1931, further liberalized in 1955, was a free-will gift of the Emperor. It established a Parliament of two houses, the upper directly appointed,

642 the lower indirectly appointed. No elections have been held; they have been postponed to the day when "education shall have been increased". In actual practice the monarchy thus remains absolute in function, and even legislation that is not directly urged by the emperor requires his signature and cannot be overridden.

563 (d) A problem of law that did not concern the old Amhara legislative authorities but that has become, though still dormant and in abeyance, a problem in recent years, is that of juridicial privileges of sectarian minorities, particularly Ethiopian Muslims.

In the past, Muslims lived there much as they did under the "Millet" system of Ottoman Turks, i.e. under their own religious jurisdiction in all internal affairs such as personal status, inheritance, marriage, divorce, endowments, etc. In Amhara areas, the Muslim ecclesiastical judge, the "Qadi" performs the functions of the "c̣heqa shum" and the "aṭbiya danya" judge for the Muslim population of his sector. He also heads their own sdhool system of Quran schools, much as the Coptic priests head the local church schools.

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692 There was no central Muslim organization, beyond this local structure. As part of modern centralization, the present emperor issued the "Qadi's Court Proclamation" in 1942 and 1944. It created a "Naibas" Council in Addis Ababa, to function as a traditional Muslim "Sharia" Court of Appeals above the local decisions of the Qadis. This structure, in turn, is supervised by the (Coptic) Minister of Justice of the central govern-

563 692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "täwahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity!" The pious [224] hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became emphatic
[171] centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive
counterpart to the Muslim formula "Iin the name of Allah
[293] the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Another
such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck-cord,
"mätäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Capts
[784] wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other
religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old
Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on
the pig, which is not even raised outside (European Addis Ababa.

795 779 As a consequence of the religiosity of the people, the rules of the church have the force of law, unchallenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more modernized administration and new legislation has made little change in the close inter-relation of church and state functions, at the grassroots level. This inter-relation is even closer in the form of social pressure. Foreign observers have remarked that without this church organization the social structure of the country would fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose total number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the population, particularly the male population.

A. The Structure of Church Organization.

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778 a) The Church buildings and design.

The traditional church building is round, designed on a pattern of three concentric circles. This combines the round pattern of the African hut, though much larger in this case, with the functional design of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Like the latter, each church has a Holy of Holies ("qeddesta qeddusan"), a closed inner sanctum, which may be entered only by upper priesthood [782] or the day's officiating priest. He carries burning and smoking incense in a metal or clay canser, while he marches around the sacred wooden tablet, the "tabot", located there. On the tabot, which may not be seen by layman's eyes, are inscribed, in Geez, the name of the saint to whom the particular (parish) church is dedicated, plus magical names of angels and geometric symbolism and phrases from both the Old and New Testament. The "tabot" represents symbolically the Ark of Moses kept by the ancient Israelites in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem

346 The second circumference, the "mäqdäs", can be [788] seen from the outside through several doorless openings. Here the priests perform the eucharist, hidden from the public gaze by portable white linen screens. The "maqdas" is restricted only during services.

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346 Within the third, walled-in circumference, the "taza", called also "qěne mahlēt" (lit. reciting-place of devotional poetry), the chorister-scribes ("dābtära") congregate while they chant devotional poetry and other

796 346 liturgy, swaying and dancing to the rythm of their raised voices, the beat of huge drums, and the tinkling of sistra.

Laymen may also occupy sections within this third enclosure, mostly near the northern end. There is no seating. Standing is required during the long services [481] that begin just before dawn and last many hours. Therefore, priests and chanters lean on "maqomya", strong bamboo crutches equipped with iron or even silver concave tops. These are also used as they sway with the rythm when the dancing is in progress. These crutches may be privately owned; but many churches own simpler ones as church utensils. When important visitors, "great men" and their guests attend, without maqomyas of their own, the chief priest usually takes those owned or used by the lesser priests to supply the Very Important Persons, to the barely disguised displeasure of the regular users.

346 562 Women are not admitted even into this third outer enclosure. They must remain outside the church building, in the yard, or leaning against the hard-mud wall, or, at a more pretentious church, under the outer colonade of wooden posts which support the overhanging edge of the roof. The roof, usually thatched, but of imported corrugated iron in better urban churches, is usually ornamented with an iron cross adorned with wooden or metal ostrich eggs.(This custom may be of older, African, origin.)

b) Parish Organization.

423 795 In many districts of the oldAmhara provinces, the church has owned much feudal land (it was given 1/3 of the land in the 13th century). Endowments from the wills of pious persons have been adding to this.

This land, which is regarded as "rest", freehold real estate, in the traditional land tenure, is administered in divisions,called "däbber", that somewhat resemble medieaval European parishes. The population of such an area, which directly or indirectly supports the local church, through tithes, rents, services, periodic supplies, memorial gifts, etc., refers to "ānd däbber agär" (lit. one particular countryside) as its home district; much as an Italian refers to "mi paese".

793 The priests attached to this church (often for long periods) usually attempt to create a residential kinship unit for themselves, similar to the residential hamlets of freehold families, inviting their nephews and other young-married kin, both patrilineal and matrilineal, to settle near the church. A priest thus closely surrounded by kin becomes the local patriarch, and his personal economic future, as well as his leadership are assured. The priest locally appointed by higher church authorities ato act as administrator is the sacristan, "gäbäz", or "qēs"(priest) gobäz", who is respectfully addressed and referred to as "aläqa" (lit. chief).

793 795 The number of clergy attached to an old-established, local church, often includes, besides the "gobäz"

793 priest, seven other priests of varying seniority, 12
795 deacons, a head deacon, a chamberlain, at least a dozen "däbtära" chorister-scribes, several aged monks, and elderly widows who have taken vows as nuns. The latter do much of the baking and beer-brewing for the local church. But if a poor church, "gäṭär" is founded by and dependent on a landholding kin group not on church land, it may have merely two priests and 3 deacons, so that on its special saint's day dabtara have to be invited from other churches, to perform the proper chants, dances, and chorus of chanting.

c) Personnel of the Church Institution, and Church Education.

793 The ordinary parish priest, "qēs" does not need to be verylearned or even very ascetic, but he is expected to live a holy life in accordance with all the rules of the church, observe even minor fasts, and to be married in the eucharistic, "qurbān" marriage. He is identified by the headcovering which he wears even in church, consisting of thin muslin wrapped around a cylindrical white cap. If his wife dies, he cannot marry again, and in order to continue functioning as a priest, he is expected to take monastic vows, putting on the "qob"(white cap) of the monk, without muslin turban.

One of the duties of the priest is to perform the eucharist on Sunday for persons considered living a Christian life, i.e. married in church (a minority).He

793 also performs masses on specific occasions, including memorials and holy days, chants part of the liturgy, reads (but usually does not know how to translate) biblical portions from both New and Old Testament in the
[783] Geez language. Before performing the eucharist, the officiating priest is expected to abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 to 3 days, for this is regarded as polluting him (an Old Testament survival). Before such occasions he takes care to sleep on the mudbench of his hut, rather than on his "alga" bed. This procedure is followed Saturday night, before a baby's babtism, before giving ritual ablution to the dying, etc. He is also expected to wash his body before giving the eucharist (but in the dry season this is often overlooked).

A learned priest, more scholarly than the parish administrator or guardian of his flock, is given the special title "mämhĕr" (roughly, "professor"). He is usually an expert on the hymn book "degwa", and is employed in teaching it to upper grades in church school.
[792] When he becomes a monk, he is oftenappointed to "abbatachen" (lit. our father), abbot of a monastery, where his mild disposition enables him to keep the peace among hotheaded, ambitious monks, some of whom regard monasticism as a career. If the "mamher" continues to advance his knowledge of church literature and history and legends (e.g. the life of the saints), he receives the title "liq". He is usually one of the few Amhara who really
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198 know and understand Geez well, including the subtle shades of meaning of the many diverse grammatical forms;

793 198 and he may also know grammatical Amharic, which has been mastered by only a few hundred contemporary Amhara (including the present emperor). This grammar is called "sowasso", and contains subtle factitives, frequentatives, etc.

793 In the higher clergy of church administration, a combination of some scholarly accomplishment and political astuteness is necessary. This next higher title is "liqä kāhēnāt" (lit. head ecclesiastic). Given a temporal bishop's territory, he is named "p̣āp̣ās" (evidently a Greek derivation); or, if his new post is within the spiritual, monastic system, "qomos", who "blesses the cap of the monk" (i.e. can accept and supervise monastic vows of lower-status ecclesiasts). This high clergy is usually found at provincial capitals or nearby monasteries.

Above this level is the very highest leadership of the church, several "liqä p̣āp̣ās", archbishops, of noble ancestry, who are in line for the position of head of monasteries and temporal church lands and properties, the "ec̣häge". This was traditionally the highest Abyssinian church officer (Amhara or Tigre). Until 1948, his only superior, the "Abuna" (Patriarch), was a foreigner, usually an Egyptian Copt sent from Alexandria. In 1948, when this tie was severed, Echäge Basilios became almost automatically the first native Abuna of Ethiopia. A younger, somewhat more modern-minded element in the high clergy is headed at present by Bishop (P̣apas) Theophilos, who may be next in line for the highest office.

794 Local personnel in the parish church included boys from 10 to 15, who are usually more reliable church students, dressed in fine church garments, with good voices and the ability to memorize liturgy. They carry the cross and other utensils in parade, and act as ritual aides in many capacities. They are called "diyakon" (deacon). When they reach puberty, indicated as soon as their voices break and they become awkward adolescents, the possibility of sexual involvement automatically cancels their position (and the gifts from the priests).

Because of the sacerdotal emphasis, worship is performed in a temple atmosphere, churches are open only during services, and there is no preaching. Thus church officials are absent from the building most of the time, leaving the key to the heavy wooden door in charge of a semi-lay caretaker.

793 He is often a däbtära, who can be regarded as semi-clergy, though he has neither ecclesiastical recognition nor tenure of office. Yet his function in the church, as scribe, translator of Geez to Amharic, chorister of devotional poetry ("qēnē"), religious poet, herbologist and physician of sorts, writer of amulets, etc., renders his participation as essential to the formal clergy as to the common people.

He must have a good voice capable of endurance, ecstatic pitch, rythm and melody. He must be more intelligent and learned than the priest, so that he can understand and explain and translate what he reads in Geez and Amharic. He has no salary and no right to the tithe, but the priest may allocate a portion to him. Often

793 Often most of his income is derived from writing "ketāb", amulets on goatskin parchment, worn by ailing persons on their neck-cord, or by women, in leather containers fastened to belt straps around the waist. The priest do forbid this amulet-writing activity, which is sometimes (not without reason) suspect not only of "white" magic, but also black magic. Yet the priests ignore and overlook this, as they have done for centuries, perhaps because in this way they obtain the "dabtara's" other services free of cost.

The däbtära is often feared by the common people because of his power, both medical and supernatural. In recent years, with the suppression of the "tänkway" witch-doctor, the clientele of the debtara has actually increased, for now there is no one but the dabtara to exorcise "buda" (magic hyena, werewolf) possession, to protect from the evil eye, or to curse and capture thieves, Moreover, it is respectable to go to the däbtära, who operates in the shadow of the church, who associates with holy priests and even drinks beer with them at feasts. No gossip can attach to a man seen entering the hut of the dabtara, for his errand may be decent and even sacred.

[66] Most däbtära reap full benefits from the awe in which they are held. They even transgress etiquette when it suits their purposes. If uninvited at a wedding or other festivity, they often "crash" the party, and expect to be and are given seats of honor and the choicest food and mead.

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793 [661] Parish priests, (unlike mämhër scholars) are also not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[539] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be halpless and starve to death).

532 346 Among artisans who do specialist work for the church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharic alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate

874 276 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura weed resembling Jimson weed called "astänager" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by dābtära in exor-

874 [276] cising the bewitched, and which seems to have an effect similer to benzedrine.

Examinations include fluency in reading Geez and in reciting by heart Gospels, Lives of Saints, and Ethics ("sirăk"), the last particalarly in the upper grades. In still higher grades they learn devotional poetry ("qenê"), including composition, and "zëma", church liturgical music in correct tones and notes.

874 792 For more advanced study, the boys interested in a career in the church have to go to monastery schools. At the old and famous Amhara monastery of Dabra Libanos the number of students may reach 500 at any given time. They earn their keep by serving the monks, begging in the vicinity, and eating as much as they can when a noble family arrives to give a memorial feast, "täzkar", in honor of a departed soul. Often the students do not possess a good shamma, and therefore have adopted the ancient clothing of sheepskins over their rags, to keep themselves warm and to be identified more easily when they go begging. Begging, they carry a small basket on the left arm and, leaning on a maqomya stick with the right, chant ecstatic church melodies until the housewives fill the baskets with enjara or parched barley ("qolo").

Those who serve the monks, carrying water, washing their clothes, carrying their food, water, etc., receive part of the monk's daily ration("dergo"). The 874 students usually graduate by age 18 to 20, and then decide whether to take monastic vows or return home to

874 utilize their learning in other capacities. The sons of former feudal nobles or of priests usually secure administrative positions or judgeships without difficulty; those of undistinguished birth could become däbtära; or locate a vacancy as teacher in a parish school--then "däj tena" the regional bishop to confirm them in the appointment.

872 538 Methods of the church school were followed, for centuries, for all those boys who attended the local school, which was in reality a lower-grade church school itself. The initial process of learning to read was called "*quter*" (lit. number), "counting" letters. The second stage was called "*Geez*", for then they learned the seven syllabic variants of each Geez consonantal letter. The third stage, "werd nebab", had the pupils read the entire syllabic alphabet up and down until completely memorized in sequence. In the fourth stage, "abugida", the order of the syllabic alphabet is mixed up and the pupil must place each syllabic letter in proper order. In the 5th stage, he reads, in a sing-song which varies from province to province, the first chapter of the Epistle of St. John, first letter by letter, then word by word, finally phrase by phrase, a repetition of the first four stages. This musical singsong "mäläktä yohanesä hawareya" symbolizes what ABC does in the West. Then follow readings from the New Testament, Psalms of David ("*dawit*"), then any text "on sight" in Geez or Amharic. Liturgical songs and poetry most often learned by heart are: "Weddasē Maryam", "Anqäsä Berhan", "Mälka

872 Maryam", "Mälka Iyasus". All of these are basic devotion-
[538] al liturgy.

[212] It is noteworthy that there is usually no formal training in writing at all, for fear of misuse. Individual students can take the initiative of finding a private tutor for writing.

At this point the local schooling ended, usually after about three years. In the past, only church students travelling to centers of learning went beyond that level. Only they learned to understand what they were reading.

874 On this higher level, church students read Geez
538 literature such as Miracles, Lives of Saints, "Gädel", "Tamarä Maryam", "Gänzät", "Mar Yes-haq", and Ethics, "sirak". Also church homilies, "dersan", containing doctrine, "dersät", composed by a saintly author, "Därasi". Important is the book "bal abäw" a combination of homilies of Greek, Coptic, and Syrian church Fathers, probably translated from Arabic to Geez in the mid-15th century under Emperor Zara Yaqob.

874 Those proceeding still further divided into specializations (sort of electives). Some specialized in devotional poetry, including compositions, for about 3 years--"qeñē". Others specialized in "zēma", for which they had to be talented with a musical ear to distinguish the musical notation of "degwa", "somä degwa", "me'raf", "mäwasat", "zenmarē qeddasē säatat". Still others specialized for a minimum of three years in religious philo-

874 sophy, "mäṣehāf" (lit. book), interpretation of Old and
New Testament, and writings of Coptic Church Fathers.on
[538] the subject. Also studied are the "Kabrä Nägäst" (epic
of the "Solomonic Dynasty") and the "Fetha Nägäst", law
code.

Examinations are held orally, usually on the saint's day of the institution, which thereupon becomes graduation day. The oral degrees given are termed, "qenē", "zēma", "mäṣehaf", according to the individual's specialization, much as Western colleges grant Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. degrees. Receipt of the degree is regarded only as a commencement in scholarship, for a real "mämhēr" requires 20 to 40 years of study, to complete all these branches of religious education, in view of the Amhara themselves.

872 Since little girls receive no formal education,
562 they cannot be taught nearly as much as boys, when, later in life, females aspire to become active nuns in nunneries. At most they are taught Geez prayer, with difficulty and by rote, and do nto go beyond what is taught little boys at the local parish schools.

792 Monks usually reside in landowning monasteries, except for former priest who have taken monastic vows and return to their parishes. Monasteries are headed by the "abbatachen" (lit. our father), whose official co-administrator is called "Säbate". In personality he is usually dominant andcommanding, unlike the mild, other-worldly abbatachen; though on occasion the same person can hold both positions. Each large monastery has a

792 council of elder monks

If a nunnery is attached to the monastery (e.g by common ownership of land), they are separated by riverbeds, steep hill, etc., and have their own pasturage meadows, and their own chapels.

262 792 465 The staple foods are beans and peas, consumed in large quantities, usually boiled as "nefro" (the staple hot dish of fasting periods), and a specially thick, nutritious bread, "daboye". The latter is at least 1-½ feet in diameter, at least half an inch thick. It is cut into quarters, and each monk receives a specified number of quarters according to his monastic rank. Thus, older, high-level monks who need less food have much surplus with which to engage the services of church students, or even trade with peasants for occasional chickens, honey, spices, etc. The range is from a mere one-quarter for the lowliest monk to 12 quarters for the head of the monastery, plus proportional distribution of "nefro".

Barley-beer is also similarly rationed out, on permitted occasions. Cotton cloth (abujedid) and shamma or natala togas are distributed once a year, preferably in time for the masqal holyday.

792 The chanting of prayers and poetry permeates the atmosphere, from 3 A.M. when the monk supervisor of the day enters the kitchen, humming the pre-dawn chants, to long after nightfall when students still practice for exams.

792 Nunneries are similarly organized, headed by an abess, but the average age is much higher, since becoming a nun is far less a careet than becoming a monk, and typically chosen by women who have been unhappy in marriage or have been widowed. Virgin nuns are extremely rare.

There are also laywomen who serve as volunteers and for the occasional spiritual and temporal benefits that result from association with a large nunnery-monastery, which still represents a major business organization, trading post, produce and commodities exchange, etc. "Gabbar" sharecrop tenants supply cereals, services, etc.

[292] The baking is done largely by nuns and laywomen, who also cook and brew barley beer, and milk cows. The last is particularly essential on non-fast periods when milk consumption is permitted. Monastic rules are so severe, that no female animals are permitted inside the monk's area; no cows, mares, bitches, etc. This is the literalness with which the separation of the sexes is enforced!

Finally, there is a non-functional clergy, a relatively small number of hermits. They usually live under cave-ledges, near brooks, in forest land near monasteries. The monks come daily to bring them food, leaving it at a respectful distance. These hermits, called "bahetawi", are paradoxically regarded as "loving mankind", as praying for the well-being of all "orthodox"

792 believers, but as quick in anger when a human face disturbs their solitude. Legends tell of hermits who, receiving a "call", returned to the temporal world as prophets and leaders of men. But this is regarded as rare. During their lifetime the hermits are held in awe, and even after their death they are believed to haunt their earthy cave-ledges, so that passers-by talk in whispers only, and fear to come too close.

(d) Utensils of the Church.

793 The headgear of the priests, "mäṭämṭämiya", is a 292 turban-like affair, basically a white muslin wrapped around the head or the cylindrical cap ("qob"). Monks wear the "qob" without the muslin, and, in many monasteries, used to dye their"qob" as well as their robes [822] yellow. In recent years the yellow color is falling into disuse, and white--believed to be the color of mourning for the passing of Christ, is worn alternately with black caps and capes. Black is evidently due to acculturation. It first entered in the form of imported chintz capes for the bishops and upper clergy in the time of Menelik II, and has spread, due to the Italian occupation.

Like noblemen, middle and higher clergy wear the kaba, the heavy , woolen, sleeveless cape, and carry an especially good "c̣hera" (flyswitch) of guresa-monkey hair. Priests wear the narrow white jodphurs at all times,

773 beneath kneelength shirt ("qãmis") and shamma; often
292 they wear sandals. They usually let a full beard grow
as richly as it will. Another private symbol of priest-
[293] ly nobility is an abbreviated "maqomya" leaning staff, shorter, without crutch, topped by an ivory knob and equipped as a walking stick, called "sãnde kahanat", with an iron point at the bottom.

In church parades, priests and deacons add colorfully embroidered garments of imported and embroidered velvet, rayon, silk, brocade, etc., often cut like the ancient leopard-skin in sleeveless capes which hang from the shoulders over front and back. If of domestic origin, the holy day garments are dyed black or red. Embroidery is of gold or silver thread, and sometimes includes gold or silver filigree plates in geometric patterns (e.g.the
[293] sun). On such occasions the ordinary sun umbrella ("janṭela") of reeds gives way to a colorful umbrella of imported cloth, in which red and gold predominate. It is now often attached to the ribs of a modern umbrella. The black cape ("kaba") is held across the chest with a metal (often silver) clasp or chain.

293 On such holy day parades, clergy and upper-class
778 persons married in a eucharistic ceremony ("qurban"), wear the metal crown, "aklil". This is one of the most valuable of each church's possessions, always locked in the church when not in use, usually donated by noble sponsors. They are usually made of silver, or at least of brass, and the older more traditiona ones are shaped in tiered stories of circles narrowing toward the top

293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.

778 In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, thepproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. [789] Smaller crosses are used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engraved verses. [325] The method of casting is the "cire perdue", which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "maqomya" crutch. [534] In front of old churches, resonant stones are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. [534] Very common is the sistrum, called "sänassel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminiscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. [177] The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

778 the frame, are now often cut from modern tin cans.

The ceremonial drinking cup used in the eucharist
is the "ṭewa", usually made of metal. But if used in
the "mähabber" communal sodality outside the church, it
is often of horn or clay, about 4½ inches high, 5 inches
diameter at top, 1½ inches at bottom. On the latter occasion
it is filled with barley beer or "berz" (honeywater).
788 This is given the peasant at plowing time to
confer blessing upon him, thus called "maras baggo" (for
spring plowing).

Other equipment belonging to the church may be
a wooden pulpit for reading (not preaching), some tin
373 oil-lamps or the old wick-like candles (called "twāf").
778 Very important are the drums, huge affairs carried by
534 the younger dancers during worship, suspended from shoulder
straps. The barrel-like "nägarit", of which the
average church has three (or must borrow them), usually
has a height of at least 30 inches, a diameter of 15 inches.
It is made of "wanza" wood (olive or other hardwood),
with tanned oxhide moistened and stretched tightly
across both ends. The drummer operates it with the
flat of his fingers and top of flat palm. Another type
is the "kabaro" drum, in which one end is bigger than
the other. The drums and the swaying maqomya sticks
keep time during the chanting. Trumpets are used only
for parades, to herald the march, but not in accompaniment.

778 When not in use, most of these utensils are locked
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251 in a little treasure house, called "bētalehem" (in

778 346 251 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyeff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 186 In recent years, church parades feature prominently the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 796 The musical chants and notations studies formally have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "qene" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "gubaē qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";
(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;
(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddede" (lit. sanctification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

533 796 same name. "Säatat", the midnight chant, has a special mode. "Dawit", the Psalms of David, are chanted in their characteristic mode, as is the "Addis Kidan" (New Testament).

On other occasions, not only does the musical composer have the opportunity to improvise, but the lyrical poetry, "qene", can be varied. In rural districts, priests who can only recite Geez but not compose in it, becaise they don't understand it, even compose "qene" in Amharic. For example:

[539] "How are you, earth? How are you, world?
Even though I love you (my home soil), I wish not to come.
Even if I hated you--how shall I stay away?"

This poem, chanted as part of a church service, is not strictly liturgical, varies from district to district, and can express a wide variety of philosophical emotions, including the weltschmerz motive illustrated here. The peasants appreciate this unofficial, Amharic addition to Geez liturgy, and often mutter under their breath "Aiyye! what good words!".

(f) Heretical Movements.

795 Like any old church, the Abyssinian Coptic church has had heretical movements within it, but none of them have ever been able to split the church into sharply divided sects. Instead, heretical sects seem to follow

795 the usual Amhara (and Tigre) pattern of regional divergence.

Thus, in the Amhara province of Godjam, where separatist regionalism is strong, there survives traces of an heretical movement from centuries ago when waves of theological debates followed the split of the Monophysites, and whenever contact with European Christians awakened the old debates. Now dormant, though not forgotten, and still quietly followed by some is the movement referred to as "*ṭsega*", or, "*tsēga lej*". Their enemies in the leadership of the Abyssinian "towado" (orthodox) church say that this movement dates to the influence of the Portuguese Jesuits in the 17th century. It is passed on in some regional church schools. To counteract this and brand it as heretical, the orthodox church requires every priest to take an oath, before ordination, that he does not hold with this or any other heretical sect.

In the Amhara province of Bebemdir (Gondar) there survive traces of a sectarian movement which is regarded as diametrically opposed in dogma to the aforementioned, leaving the orthodox view somewhere in the middle. This movement was the "*qebat*". It held the most absolute of the Coptic doctrine of Monophysitism, emphasized the person of Jesus, and deplored the widespread worship of saints. It is somewhat more respectable in the orthodox church than the other sect, but appeal to saints is too popular to give this sectarian view much future.

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B. The Functions of the Church in the Life of the Lay Public.

a) Sacerdotal Emphasis.

From the structure of the Abyssinian Church, the sacerdotal emphasis is evident, and even more so in the function and routines affecting the lay public. Church worship is regarded as a "temple" worship of the deity and saints, rather than as congregational worship. The latter idea seems entirely absent.

Discussions of religious philosophy, even of ethics, is limited to the higher grades of church schools, particularly monasteries. The view seems to regard such knowledge as confusing to the lay mind, even dangerous: the layman had far better listen and obey what filters down to him. There is no tradition of sermon or preaching. The ordinary parish priest usually knows barely enough liturgy for regular services, leaving occasional translations up to the dabtara. Nevertheless, the priest is supposed to influence the public indirectly, through living a holy life. Often he is the only local Christian who has married by "qurban" and is thus on good, eucharistic terms with the church, while the layman is technically excommunicated for having married by Zsemanya". More directly, he exerts influence as the arbiter of domestic quarrels, etc. He lends dignity to life through the rites of passage, particularly the series of memorial ("täzkar") feasts.

779 The sacerdotal emphasis is so strong that efforts of the emperor to introduce preaching(of ethics, restraint in mourning, etc.) have been quietly ignored by the church, except for some polite and occasional attempts to please the emperor in Addis Ababa by fulfilling his wish in his own church.

b) The Annual Cycle of the Church Calendar, and its function.

805 The calend ar of Abyssinia is based on the Julian calendar of Rome, but the year begins September 11th, following the ancient Egyptian usage. The year has 12 months of 20 days each, plus 5 or 6 intercalar days at the end (the extra day once every 4 years). Historically this calendar probably came to Abyssinia from Alexandria, early in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. However, Syrian usage was followed by the Abyssinian church in the practice of establishing feast and fast days in commemoration of martyrs under Diocletian and Syrian bishops of that period.

After Islam conquered Egypt, ecclesiastical computations continued to arrive, though often interrupted, through the Coptic Abuna sent from Alexandria, These computations arrived in the Arabic language, were translated into Geez, and collectively called "Abushaker" (Father of the Moon), after the book originally compiled by the author Demetros, who claimed to have received them by revelation from the Holy Ghost.

This calendar is about 7 to 8 years behind the

805 Gregorian, so that, prior to September 11th, the Western 1956 A.D. corresponds to the Abyssinian 1948 A.M., "*amätä mehrāt*" (year of grace). The same year is regarded by the Abyssinian church as 7448 "*amäta aläm*" (year of Creation); and 1672 "*semaētat amät*" (era of martyrs). There is a 4-year cycle of apostles, so that 1954 A.D. (1946 A.M.) was the year of Mark, "zämmänä marqos wängelāwi".

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805 In the annual cycle of religious events, the dates of each holy day are further commemorated by monthly repetition of a shadow-like minor holyday. Christmas is commemorated every month on the 29th, because it falls on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This reminder is utilized also in everyday layman's temporal affairs, and the agreement to meeti is expressed by individuals as "I shall meet you on Täklä Haymanot", since everyone knows this means the 24th day of the month. The following religious dates are commonly utilized by the laymen for secular purposes:

Table 8: Dates of the Religious Calendar Utilized for Secular Purposes.

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1st day of the month	-	"Ledäta", birthday of the Virgin Mary.
5th	-	"Abbo", or "Gabra Manfas Qeddus". Both important saints, whose actual anniversaries fall in the rainy season.
12th	-	"Mikāel", as a reminder of the miracles ascribed to this arch-

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angel. On his actual day, a popular public picnic is held--a major social event.

16th - "Kidanä Mehrät" (Covenant of Mercy). This is a preferred monthly day on which mahabber sodalities like to gather for private group communion.

19th day of the month- "Tahsas Gabriēl". Reminder of the miracles ascribed to this archangel.

21st - "Sionä Maryam". Reminder of the annual event of the revelation of Mary after her death.

23rd - "Giyorgis". St. George's day.

24th - "Täklä Haymanot". Abyssinian head of church, now sainted, who re-established the "Solomon Dynasty."

27th - "Medhane Aläm" (Redeemer of the World), i.e. Jesus.

28th - "Emmanuel". Another reference to Jesus.

29th - "Bäala Egziabhēr" (Festival of God), or, "Balä Wold", festival of the birth of Jesus, monthly reminder of Christmas.

796 When the floods of the rainy season recede in early September, the yellow daisy carpets the pasture and the tall green grain begins to mature, the new year begins, with the month Mäskäräm. This heralds the first

796 holy day of the year, "Mäsqäl", Feast of the Cross, on
the 17th, and all who can prepare new garments. The
countryside is freshly washed from 3 months of rains, and
the sun is welcomed. It seems as if nature herself is
beginning a new year, another annual cycle.

From St. John's Day, the first day of the year,
children begin to gather the plentiful wildflowers, and
to bring them to kinfolk across brooks which are again
824 passable. These bouquets of daisies,"Mäsqäl abäba" i.e.
Mäsqäl flower, are considered "encuṭaṭash" (lit. take
this tribute). This symbolism is linked to the first
plant brought by the dove to the ark ofNoah after the
floods, which plant is said to have been the flower "engec̣ha"; others say it is because King Solomon gave the
Queen of Sheba a pearl of the type "enqwe".

In return, the children expect promises of gifts
of new clothing for the Masqal feast. Even adults give
"gursha" gifts to each other, of food or other items,
and the increasingly generous sunshine and raised level
of emotion inclines to generosity. Elders and old women
who have turned nun bless every visiting kinsman withthe
788 formula:

> "Blessed be He, (who) from time to time (one year
> to the next) has let you pass (in good fortune)."

796 The "Mäsqäl" Feast of the Cross, in Abyssinian
776 church tradition, dated back to an early Christian Queen
"Ēleni" (Helena) who sponsored an expeditinn to Palestine to seek the true cross of the curcifixion. When she
found it, she decided to announce the joyous news to her

796 own people and to the Christians of Constantinople.
[779] Therefore, she ordered that a tall pole be erected, crown-
ed with a burning torch, called "*dämmärā*." The present
procedure re-enacts this traditional tale, for on the
afternoon preceding the 17th huge poles are stacked up,
parades circle them, and in the evening the stacks are
set afire, lighting up the landscape.

In preparation, some days before Masqal, peasants
and townsmen go to the bush to cut long sticks, so that
they will be dry in time. Pious persons touch them to
the hearthstone and pray that the harvest will be good,
[292] so that they will not have to subsist on cabbage (the
food of poverty). Even the poorest can bring the plenti-
ful yellow "masqal" daisies, tied to the top of the
poles. The stacks are formed on public areas, such as
a marketplace, in front of the church, etc. Adults and
children parade around them at least 3 times, wearing their
best new garments and trinkets, This is an occasion for
girls to be seen at their prettiest, and for young braves
to boast.

Some of the young men form into groups and dance
[535] the "hoya-hoya", refrains of past or future brave deeds.
Warriors perform the loyalty jumping-dance shouting
"Addis Ababa". Sometimes, when the resinous torches
are lit, mock battles develop. Little girls dance rings-
around-the-rosy, while little boys may take the occasion
to burn scars on their forearms as proof of courage and
to be "strong". Pious elders take a brand from the lit
bonfire and rekindle their home hearths, in the hope of

796 transferring the blessing of the true cross to their homes.

[184 565] All classes participate in the parade, the bonfire and the worship. There is complete cultual continuum. Even Emperor Haile Selassie parades around the stake three times, accompanied by highest dignitaries of church and state. In the village, the ceremony awaits the arrival of the local cheqa shum and "great men". Old warriors come dressed in their lion-manes and carry the rhinoceros shields of their youth; they boast heroic deeds in the "fukkara". Priests bless the scene and the people, waving cross and incense burners, "blessing the land", so that the harvest will be rich (much as the water is blessed on Epiphany).

Women, as usual, form their own groups, in impromptu singing and rythmic handclapping. The men do not overlook them, bringing them ashes and charcoal from the blessed bonfire, from which the women make a paste with butter and smear the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Children rise early on the day of "dämmära" to collect their promised gifts. In groups they go from house to house, chanting:

"Let husband and wife consult with each other,
and give us gifts".

Feudal nobles used to take this occasion to acknowledge the knighthood name, the "färäs sem" of young nobles. They also gave a raw beef, "brundo" feast, to their retainers, and a big "gebber"(feast) consuming huge jars full of barley beer, pitchers of mead, and bottles of "araqi" (distilled).

796 While some of this feasting is now less orgiastic than in the past, "azmari" musicians still pass among the feasters, singing praises to the host and noble guests, [534] to the accompaniment of the single-string "masenqo" of male singers, and the banjo-like "qrar" fingered by women azmari. Torchlight parades, both of men and of women, leave the bonfire later, wind toward the nearest river or brook (still full though no longer raging) to enjoy the pleasure of bathing at its best, before the brooks dry to a trickle.

796 182 Thus the first church function of the year is an important factor in unifying this society: significant for all ages, both sexes, all classes; sets a time and place for rites of passage in the life cycle; renders visible paternalistic feudal patterns of human relationships; reopens the annual cycle of economic endeavors (caravans, weaving, etc.); reopens the pattern of kin visiting after the hibernation of 3 months; and reinforces the traditional religious as well as national values and attitudes.

796 In the months that follow there are several religious festivals, which also have social significance. Named after special saint's days, they vary from region to region.

The next widely observed holy day is Christmas, on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This does not nearly approach the significance it has in the Western 796 526 world, nor the Masqal feast just described. In fact, Christmas, "Ledät" (lit. birthday) is more often referred to as "gänna", the name of the hockey-like game played by the young men on this day, and for the next two weeks. It is a sacerdotal holy day with little social significance. The priests congregate in the church of the district that bears the name "Iyasus" (Jesus). Services begin at midnight the eve before and end with chanting and dancing inthe sunshine at 9 A.M. when the clergy parades in the churchyard.

Old Testament survivals are indicated by one of the many minor church celebrations, the feast of "gezrat" (circumcision), celebrating the circumsision of Jesus Christ a week after birth, on the 6th day of the month of Ter. It is held entirely within the church, especially monasteries.[77]

More important than Christmas is Epiphany, "Temqät", on the 11th of Ṭer. In the late afternoon preceding this day, the "tabot" are carried out of all churches, swathed in imported silks and borne on the heads of priests, in vast ceremonial parades that stop frequently for chanting and ceremonial dancing, until the procession, which includes national vlags, arrives at the water. There a solid, large tent hasbeen erected to house these sacred objects.

Evening chants and dances are continued to the beat of drums and tinkle of sistra, until the last light fades. The faithful surround the tent all night long as guard of honor, while feasting and drinking continues.

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[77] The circumcision of Jesus is also celebrated by the Christian Alawites, in Syria. See Janot, E.: La Famille Alawite. Les Missions Catholiques, 65, Paris, Aout 1933, pp. 381-384.

796 After dawn, the priests are again ready, awaiting only the arrival of the bishop, the governor and other officials, before resuming the services which this time include the re-baptism of the populace. Lighted candles are set afloat on the pond, and the bishop, after reciting blessings over the water and the future light and heavy rains, dips the cross in the water and sprinkles it over the governor and other "great men"; then lesser priests take over until every man is sprinkled. Very pious and rustic peasants jump into the water, younger boys strip and swim in the pond usually filled for this occasion. Amidst further chants and dancing, the procession slowly winds its way back, stopping at crossroads to take leave of the various "tabot" returning to their own churches. Only the "tabot" of "Mikael" remains at the water, for the following day belongs to that archangel.

The same ceremony as in villeges, is followed in the capital. In national sports, the "gänna" season (hockey) ends that day, and the "guks" season of horsemanship and lance-throwing in mock pursuit, begins. The latter name is therefore closely connected with Ṭemqät.

[262] Among the many minor feasts and fasts that follow, another Old Testament survival stands out. It stands out as a 3-day fast--no animal products, and no food before noon), from the 8th to the 10th of Yäkatit, called "tsomä Nänäwe", reminiscent of the Fast of Nineveh mentioned in the bible. It is observed only by church students and clergy, but is more widely known than "gezrat".

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262 As soon as this is over, a period of intensive meat-eating begins, similar to European carne-vale (carnival), for the same reason: the long lenten period is approaching, and in Abyssinia this means also abstention from eggs, cheese, milk, and other animal products (some even avoid fish), just as on any Wednesday and Friday; and no food before noon, for the strictly observant. The fast is obeyed by nearly everyone, in all classes. This fast begins on the 22nd day of Yäkatit, and is called "hudade" (lit. suffering) to indicate both the suffering of Jesus and of the faster. It is also referred to as "arba tom"(lit. 40-fast) though in fact the fast lasts 55 days. Women prepare a variety of vegetable and grain dishes, to substitute for the absence of more solid food.

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[171] Finally, on the 17th day of the month of Miyazya, the long-awaited Easter, "Fassika" (related to the Hebrew Passover, "Pessaḥ" etymologically), occurs.

It is the climax of a week of preparations during which the lenten "hudadey" sharpens. This week is called "hemamat" (passion, extreme suffering), and no work is done, symbolizing the sympathy withthe weakness and suffering of Jesus. Even the Saturday market is cancelled--the only time this happens.

[443] Purchasers of meat and supplies for Easter must do their shopping on Thursday, when a special big market is held. The price of sheep, etc., goes up sharply, even doubles, in anticipation of the feast. Even tyẹ̄ff and pepper (bärbärē) become more expensive. Ethnic craftsmen take this opportunity to bring their products,

796 selling plowpoints for the plowing that will soon begin
when the light rains have softened the ground.

[262] On this Thursday, the pious begin a 3-day fast,
taking only dry peas and water after the noon hour. Good
796 Friday, called "seqlät", is on the 15th of Miyazya. Chil-
857 dren, too young to fast, are given special privileges
of impertinence that day. (For are not all rules sus-
pended now that the Savior himself is dying?). From sun-
rise on, boys and girls knock at doors of huts and hous-
es, chanting:

[539] "Musha-musho, (nonsense rhyme, meaning lamentation, funeral chant)
we come for your crucifixion (Oh Christ);
Fill (our hands) with flour (ye women),
we are many as fleas".
Musho-musha,
May He (God) give ye fat cattle,
children in your womb;
give us gifts!"

They are given freshly-baked bread being prepared for the Easter feast, but they keep on demanding, making the most of this rare freedom, insulting and mocking the stingy hosts. They may carry an effigy corpse of the latter, as if to his funeral, weeping and lamenting his "lekso" (funeral eulogy). Some boys dress as priests, the girls imitating hysterical women relatives, until they bury him with full ceremonials on the market place, to the great amusement of the adult audience.

796 Adults on this Friday rise early for morning wor-

796 ship, perform the "segdat" (prostration) many times. This signifies the climax of lenten suffering. Toward evening, when Christ is presumed to have died on the cross, the pious are of good cheer, for He has descended to purgatory, has tied the devil hand and foot, and has liberated all the souls to paradise.

796 793 At earliest dawn Saturday morning, about 5:30, priests and deacons put on their best garments, including "kapa" (cape) and "lämd", carry their colorful sun umbrellas as if in procession, and pass through the streets with parade cross, bell, incense burners, and armsful of yellow-green palm strips called "qetäma". They stop before every house or hut, ringing the bell. The sleepy owner answering the call is given the reed to wind flat around his forehead, and he will wear it all day. The priest sings out: "Oh, master, Jesus Christ has been found! The devil is chained!". In appreciation of the good news, the head of the house gives the priest some money, and receives a blessing in return. This ceremonial interchange is called "Gebra salam" (serving the greeting).

796 Sometime before midnight, the church services begin, with alternately mournful and hopeful liturgy. When the night is about to end, at cockcrow Sunday morning (about 4 A.M.) the resurrection, ("tensaē") is loudly declared amidst shouting and ringing of bells. [262] The pious now break fast with crushed linseed ("talba") mixed with honey, and pronounce the blessing of having been permitted to reach this day. All rush out of the

796 smoky, incense-filled church, to reach home and begin the feasting on meat. Sheep are rapidly slaughtered all over the area, fires are lit, pepper stew is boiling everywhere, and the vast jars of barley beer, injära, coffee, and milk and butter are consumed. This feasting, often ruinous to the digestion, continues for some time, for the Wednesday and Friday fasts are abrogated for the next 50 days.

With regained strength, fired by good food and [526] beer, the young men begin games of javelin throwing. Ball games ("qenc̣hebt") continue the entire following week, when the heavy feasting still keeps work to a minimum.

The last outdoor picnic before the rains takes place occurs on the 1st day of the month of "Genbot", when the "Ledäta" (birthday) of the Virgin Mary is celebrated. The leafy outdoor shelter, "dass", is erected for this occasion. Both women and men take part, though [789] in separate groups. At the end of the day, some women "clean house" of evil spirits, to keep them away while shut in during the rainy season. This is done by casting boiled "nefro" porridge into the bush, telling the personified sickness to go after it.

[262] During the next church holydays, fish, particularly the "senro", become staples of the menu of priests and others, since rivers begin to fill with water and fish are more plentiful. There is a church festival "räbbä kahnat" (lit. inventory of the priests), a purely internal affair,

796 The holy day which now symbolized most strongly the union of church and state occurs just after the climax of the rainy season. On the 7th day of the monthe of Nahase occurs the feast of the Trinity, "Selassyē", which the present emperor adopted as his imperial name at coronation. On this day, the "tabot" from the local "Selassyē" church is taken on a colorful, though usually rain-drenched parade. In some regions this feast is called "Abba Abraham", because it is believed that the day also commemorates the Old Testament event when 3 angels [188] visited Father Abraham. The parade includes also many national flags of the (secular) state, and photographs of the bearded emperor, carried by deacons. Loyalty shouts of "Addis Ababa" are frequently heard.

The last important socio-religious holy day is "Buhē", the Transfiguration of Jesus, on the 13th of the same month. It is also called "Dabra Tabor", because it is believed to have taken place on Mt. Tabor in ancient Palestine. Again a church bearing that name is chosen as center of the celebration. Buhe is also a feast of lights, perhaps to symbolize the hope that the rainclouds will soon part and let the sun be seen [373] once again. There are torchlight parades, the torches made from braided, resinous barks, carried on the way to the church just before sunrise. All shout "Buhe, Buhe" on many occasions on this day. It is a family holiday remembered all through life by the children. On this day the hearths are brightly lit, and mothers bake a special wheaten bread for the children. Even

796 the youngest are lifted to see the parade. Boys and
[857] girls age 7 to 15 go from hut to hut starting inthe early morning, chanting "Buhe, Buhe", "hoyyä, hoyyo, ho", and verses:

[539] "All shout 'Buhe!, children all!
Give us what (you have) prepared; Do not change
(your mind)! "

"When the rooster has crowed, night is gone;
After Buhe, the winter(rainy season) is gone".

796 Long whips, mostly of finely braided fibre, of
526 tree bark or "tucha" grass, are made before Buhe, and
[411] young men practice with them until they can hit even small targets easily. On Buhe afternoon, two groups of contestants face each other, often across a swollen brook, and line up so that each individual faces an opponent of equal skill and strength. They come armed with the whips, and begin to warm up by hurling insults at each other, addressing each other in the female gender. Soon the game of aiming at the face and ducking the adversary's whip begins. The whip has a short wooden handle, but the strap may be as long as 15 feet. Sometimes this opportunity is taken to work out grudge fights. For, traditionally, any wounds incurred, even the loss of an eye, cannot be taken to court or cause a feud, as the result of this ritual battle. No other weapons may be used. The losers flee, are pursued to their huts, and the victors are entitled to all the

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.

526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the
776 annual festival of St. Raphael, called "qeddus Rufaēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls
821 heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so
787 that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

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874 This day is final examination day for the boys who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabtara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

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539 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
"In the name of Rufael,

796 857 [539] from the bin of peas

fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

796 805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning,and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Ṭsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditionally [651] also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts.

That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitorectomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 852 553 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "Gäbre-Mikaēl" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Taamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and dangerous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

608 852 to the abolition of 1942), the godparents usually obtained his freedom. The relationship is one of artificial kinship. To symbolize this literally, the godfather and godmother clasp the right thumb of the baby and swear by the Trinity that they will not distinguish between their own children and the godchild.

783 At first baptism, baby or adult, the entire body is immersed or bathed in holy water. Every year, on the festival of "Ṭemqät" (Epiphany), the sprinkling of the crowd with baptismal water is considered re-baptism, to wash away any breach with Christianity during the year. A woman who has had sexual intercourse with a Muslim must undergo complete baptism, otherwise the neighbors and the church will ostracize her. A person severly ill and considered possessed by demons is rebaptized.

872 At five, boys and girls begin useful functions in the family economy, and therefore boys are often 10 years old before they begin to go to church school. This schooling takes place under the shady cypress trees in the churchyard, under the direction of a young priest or däbtära. The method is rote learning of Geez and Amharic reading, and liturgy, beginning with the Gospel of St. John: "mäläktä yohanesä hawareya". Usually neither translation from the Geez liturgical language nor writing are taught. Graduates of this 3-year school qualify to serve as deacons. In recent years, they may then enter the 3rd grade of a government elementary school. Even church students now use the one-page printed "fidäl" (alphabet) in Geez-Amharic script, which, in addition,

872 has the photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie and the traditional Gospel of St. John in Geez. Priests now often teach the beginnings of basic arithmetic, in church schools.

783 In adult life, the church affects the layman less through participation in worhhip than through his individual confessor, the "näfs abbat", (lit. soul father). Each person is supposed to see him at least once a month, and he soon becomes a personal advisor, confidante, marriage counselor, etc. Therefore, even when a person changes residence, he often maintains this relationship to his "näfs abbat". If he were to take on a new one, the penalty assigned for sins (which the confessor keeps as a sort of fee) would be higher. His regular confessor, who knows his financial condition, asks little beyond the seasonal and festival gifts considered his due. In time of trouble, the regular confessor will appear as a character witness in court, or as "wās" (guarantor) to help him obtain employment or to keep him out of jail pending trial.

585 Most laymen, are not married by eucharistic marriage in church (the "qurban"). There is no social or religious stigma to marrying outside the church; in fact the priest comes to the secular ceremony ("semanya") to bless the couple. But it does mean technical excommunication, and the couple cannot wear the "aklil" crown at church festivals and parades.

763 As a further result, such a couple cannot receive full last rites, though the confessor-priest will come

763 to hear confession and pray at the bedside. To become eligible for full last rites, elderly pious persons often take vows as monks or nuns.

764 If the deceased was a priest or monk, the arms are tied across the chest in the sign of the cross. For a lay person they are tied across the middle of the body. Eyes and mouth are closed. The corpse is tied in a mat. No permanent gravestones are set in the churchyard where most members of the congregation are buried (poor non-[764]members are buried in the bush). In the case of a "great man", the grave is sometimes marked for some years, and the skull and bones later sent to a sacred monastery for storage under a cave-ledge. In a few years the place of burial is usually obliterated by the rains, unless rocks have been gradually piled on it as a memorial.

At the burial, the priest chants from the book "mäṣehafä genzät", the funeral book which begins with [764] the "fetät", the prayer for absolution of sins. For a priest or monk, the parchment "lefafä ṣedeq" (Bandlet of Righteousness) is spread over the body. It is an early Coptic Book of the Dead, containing spells and formulae that apparently originated in Egypt, dating partly to early periods.

The confessor-priest prays for the ascension of the soul, as the body is lowered into the grave. Neighbors express condolence to the kinfolk wishing that no further tribulations hit them. This is returned with the wish "May you have a burier in your old age, who will give "täzkar" for you". The confessor inherits

764 personal belongings such as shamma, horncup, oxhide bed-cover.

765 The täzkar is the memorial feast 40 days after death, on which, under favorable conditions, the soul is believed to be freed from purgatory. Preparations for this feast are made almost as soon as the funeral is over. Kinfolk and neighbors bring food and drink, but despite that, tazkar feasts are often costly, far beyond the economic means of poorer families. Money must be given to the priests who recite the "fetät", the prayer for absolution. It is the responsibility not only of direct descendants, but of the entire kinfolk to arrange for a "täzkar", and it is a great shame when a person has no tazkar. No tazkar is made for unbaptized babies; for violaters of the fasts of Wednesday, Friday and lent; for suicides. Also, when a person dies what is considered a particularly unnatural death, by drowning, fire, lightning, etc., the priests have to decide whether a tazkar can be held, or whether the death was some special punishment for some great capital crime that had gone undetected.

d) "Saluting the church", and Private Communion.

788 Though lay individuals do not usually participate in church worship, going to the "betä kristyan" (church) is a formal affair. The shamma is redraped when entering the churchyard, so as to form a cross-wise fold over

788 the chest. The church is then "saluted" by kissing the wall, a ceremony called "sälam" in Geez. If the person wears sandals, he must remove them before entering the church itself.

[211] On the path near the church, or leading to it, there is often a conical pile of small rocks. This may indicate a church on a nearby hilltop, and this pile, "mäsalämiya", functions then as a poster of salutation. If the passerby is in a hurry on another errand, he may simply bow deeply in the direction of the church instead of going there to kiss the wall. In modern times truck-drivers will bow in that direction without stopping.

794 The individual layman usually belongs to a private sodality that holds private communion together. But he may, more informally, invite some personal friends on his personal Saint's day, especially his namesake's. Since this informal private communion is cheaper, costing only the price of a jar of beer and some roasted grain, it is more popular among the poor than the formal "mähabber" sodality. The informal private communion, called "zekert", is shared only by men, uses no drummer, no expensive wheat bread, no collection for a common purse, and usually only the personal confessor is invited from among the priesthood. But the zekert cannot be [554] used as a means of gaining social prestige.

795 e) Religious Syncretism.

Surrounded by Muslim and "pagan" religions, and

795 led by a comparatively tolerant and rarely learned clergy, even loyal and observant Abyssinian Christians frequently follow practices of other religions without being ostracized or even criticized.

755 In the middle of the preparations for "Mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross, emotionally ill or despondent patients believed to be possessed by an "evil" Zar or "Buda" spirit, are taken by their relatives into the incipient sunshine and deposited at a spot where trails form a crossroad. A doctor of the "Zar" religious cult (see later description) performs incantations, using incense to lure the Zar. Then a chicken is slaughtered, with the Christian formula pronounced over it. This cure is believed to be particularly effective if the Zar spirit is a Coptic Christian himself, who will then feed on the properly slaughtered chicken and leave the patient alone.

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795 On Fassika, the Coptic Easter, Ethiopian Muslims living in Coptic provinces have an equivalent feast, in which many Coptic Christian women andd small children passively participate only a few hours after they have returned home from all-night prayers at the church. Even more curious is the fact that this particular Ethiopian-Muslim holy day celebrated near Gonder the day of a Muslim saint called "Sheykh Abāder", is celebrated according to the Coptic, not the Muslim, calendar. (There is a parallel to such calendar syncretism in Egypt, where the founder of a dervish order, Ahmed il-Badawi, is celebrated at his tomb according to the Coptic calendar.[78]

[78] Littmann, E.: Ahmed il-Badawi. Ein Lied auf den Ägyptischen Nationalheiligen.Akad. Wiss. u.Lit.,Mainz, 1950, No. 3.

796 795 On Easter, the Muslim worshippers of Saint Sheykh Abader leave Gondar town beginning at dawn, for a hill about half an hour's walking distance to the east, bringing with them about 100 live sheep, each donated by a faily. This is the hour when the Christians still feast on meat and beer. The hill is far enough away so that therival religions do not annoy each other, but in the belief of the worshippers, the miracle of a water spring [312] will recur on this particular hill on this saint's day, despite the seasonal dryness which is then at its height making water a valuable and much desired commodity.

The Muslim men seat themselves on one side of the hill, the Muslim women, their hair covered with colorful red kerchiefs, on the other. Some erect shelters against the mounting sun. The men proceed to slaughter the sheep, away from the groups, with the formula "Iin the name of Allah the all-merciful and Muhammad his prophet". The meat is well roasted, then passed around in baskets, the pieces already cut to individual portions. There is plenty for everyone. There is also wheat bread ("qiṭṭa").

The Muslim leader meanwhile has proceeded half way up the hill, at a spot midway between the men and the women, and has begun to dig a hole about three feet deep. The water table is sufficiently high here so that muddy water begins to accumulate in the hole gradually. He digs another few inches, and more water accumulate. A half-gourd, sliced lengthwise, is brought and he reaches into the hole and begins to pass up the water. When the silt has settled in the bottom of the gourd, it is

796 held high, and everyone acclaims the miracle. Every-
795 one tries to obtainssome of the water to drink; the bottom of the hole keeps filling up for some time. Later, mud from the hole is passed around on green leaves,
[751] and many, especially women, smear it on their foreheads, against sickness, demons, and barrenness which afflicts many of the townswomen. Some older Muslims recite prayers. The mood is generally gay, and the women banter happily from an hour after sunrise to high noon, when the feast is over, Then all begin to return to Gondar town, after pledging gifts for the next celebration of the saint's day, provided he has fulfilled their prayers.

Meanwhile, Copts, mostly women, including many barren ones, have joined the Muslim women on the hill. No special notice is taken of them; they are tolerated, and not insulted as they would be on other occasions. The Copts bring their own live sheep and the few Coptic men present slaughter them apart from the Muslims, so that their formula "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, One Divinity", is not heard. The Christian women and children also smear some of the saint's mud on their foreheads, and also vow donations to the next Sheykh Abader feast if their prayers are fulfilled.
[783] They bear the tell-tale marks until they reach their own homes in Gondar, and are not punished for what otherwise might at least require re-baptism. Like Muslims, they even bring mud, rocks, and water from the saint's hill to their ill kinfolk. Coptic men do not flaunt their participation so freely. The Coptic priests, who of

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795 course know what is going on, ignore the whole matter, just as they ignore the Zar worship.

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788 Parallels to such religious syncretism are found not only in Egypt, but also in Syria, where Christian women go on short-range pilgrimage to the tomb of "weli" saints and smear mud from holy springs on their faces on a certain day of the Christian religious calendar.[79] This takes place in rural areas of Homs, but even near Damascus Muslimc take part in celebrating the day of the Feast of the Cross in September.[80] Just as in visits to the tomb of water saints in Muslim Algeria,[81] the pilgrimage to Sheykh Abader is believed to bring on the light rains, which usually begin about that time, making early plowing and a good harvest possible. This is equally desired by both Muslims and Copts, just as individual good health is desired by both. Perhaps this unexpressed recognition explains the paradox of this religious syncretism.

f) The Church and the Present National State.

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659 Three phases can be distinguished in the recent relations of the Abyssinian church and the Amharic "Solomonic Dynasty" which the church returned to power in the 13th century but which now attempts to modernize

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[79] Gaulmier, J.: Pélérinages Populaires à Hama. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, 1931, Vol.1, pp.137-152.
[80] Tresse, R.: Usages Saisonnières. Revue d'Etudes Orientales 1937,pp. 1-4; Lecerf & Tresse: Les Arada de Damas. BEO, 7-8, pp.236-264.
[81] Probst-Biraben,J.H.: Pour La Pluie de Printemps en Algerie. En Terre d'Islam, 22,1942, pp. 264-272.

779 the nation in Western patterns.

659 (1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-dominated
[721] Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and
promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the
"tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan
and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his
[566] military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches
were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation,
made permanent by feudal grants under which the
local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to
remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal
church.

This use of the church has been continued, though
with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.
[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage,
is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use,
if they wish to write their languages, particularly in
[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of
the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized
the power of the church. Finally, on November
4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131
articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian
"Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on
the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of
the state.

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178 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his
power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal
power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

659 In
178 many criminal cases, culprits who had sought asylum
[696] from the police of the state by entering a churchyard
and sounding the resonant stone bells to announce to
the pursuers that they had placed themselves under the
protection of the church, were taken away by force,
despite the protests of the priests. This so deteriorated
some of the temporal power of the church that persons
involved in kin bloodfeuds were also no longer safe in
[688] church confines. Conversely, the traditional request of
priests to law enforcement agencies of the state to
arrest violaters of church rules (e.g. adulterers) now go
unheeded except in remote rural areas, and even there
such a prisoner is no longer held and sentenced to an
[688] indefinite term on such a charge. Fines and
imprisonment for violation of the Sabbath or for working on a
saint's day, also are no longer enforceable.

An official extreme in this direction was reached in 1942, when, a year after his victorious return, Emperor Haile Selassie issued a series of decrees stripping the church of all feudal power, and most of its temporal power, except in the town of Aksum. Under these decrees, church land could henceforth be taxed by the state, though the taxes were to be used to administer church maintenance and education; church courts could levy only spiritual penalties, not money fines; the Central Treasury of the state was to administer rents from church lands. All statute-labor ("gabbar") rights of the church over sharecropping peasants living on its former feudal estates were abrogated.

It took two years for the leadership of the church to recover from this shock and to bring pressure on the emperor, through his kinsman, the aging but still powerful Ras Kassa. In 1944 further decrees partly returned certain limited temporal rights of the church (such as the right to ask sharecroppers on church land for food supplies, fuel, repair of the local churches) in return for religious services and church education. Little actual change has taken place in the rural, old-Amhara provinces, but even there the priests now enforce their demands in subtler fashion, usually making heavier demands on recent peasants in their areas rather than on old-established families.

Thus, in effect, the state now rules the church from the top. Both Emperors Menelik II and Haile Selassye I refused to be crowned in the church capital, Aksum, preferring their own state capital, Addis Ababa.

Phase (3) represents the more subtle handling of the relations with the church by the present emperor, to utilize the church's structure and function to promote his policies of centralization and modernization.

Already mentioned, the request of the emperor to the sacerdotal church to copy from the Western church the function of preeching ethics to the common lay people, has had little effect. Somewhat more successful has been his repeated request, passed informally through the church hierarchy by word of mouth rather than published decree, to restrain the excesses of the "täzkar" memorial feast. These excesses include both the public

659 178 spectacle of self-abandon of the mourners, who scream, roll on the ground, cut themselves bloody, etc.; and the financial burden of excessively elaborate memorial feasts which were and sometimes still are ruinous to the families involved. To teach by example--a most effective way in a country where everyone imitates the "great man"" --the emperor himself ordered that no memorial feast be given for his own daughter who died in 1933; just some money donations were made to the priests reciting prayers for her soul.

[874] More recently, the emperor founded the Theological College of Addis Ababa, headed by an Egyptian Coptic president and some faculty members from among Egyptian Copts, to modernize the curriculum of the future leaders of the church among whom he hopes, for the first time, to find allies rather than permanent foes. The probable successor to the present Abuna (archbishop) of Ethiopia, Theophilus, is believed to share the emperor's views and has already travelled abroad several times. The emperor wishes the younger clergy to become more learned and to be able to translate the Bible from [198] Geez into Amharic for the lay populace. He has promoted the printing of bibles in Amharic, rather than Geez, thus using religion to promote the official, national language of the state.

6. The Fraternal Association called "mähabbär".

575 This "voluntary" association of individuals, growing out of the "private communion" of the Abyssinian

575 church, fills several voids in Amhara social organization, and establishes links of human relationships which otherwise leave little choice to the individual of any age and sex beyond his assigned roles in the feudal system, church, and family.

Perhaps this is why there are so many facets to the "mähäbbär" association, and why it is called upon by its members to fulfill so many functions that in many other human societies take separate forms. To a considerable extent the mahabbar maintains an elastic equibrium between the individual and the society. For in this association he can exercise a personal choice; he can cross boundary lines of age and sex, and occasionally even of class; here he has the rare oppartunity of new experience in interpersonal relations; here he finds economic as well as emotional security; recognition of his status in a highly respectable association; the response of life-long personal friends.

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796 The mähäbbär in Abyssinia may be as old as Coptic Christianity itself in that country. It is based on the "private communion", one of the few instances in which the sacerdotal church concerns itself with the layman, probably because the time and place of mahabbar meeting leave them remote from the ritually sacred precincts of the church buildings. By the same token the mahabbar enables the church to extend a broad control over its lay members.

The religious basis of this private communion rests on the monthly meeting of its members for worhhip, in the hut of one of them (they take turns as hosts).

575 796 The preferred number of charter members is 12. The reason is not certain, but some ascribe it to the 12 apostles, some so that each member has the duty and privigele of acting as host once a year. The evening itself, within each month, is preferably the host's. The host asks his confessor-priest to officiate furing the religious part of the meeting. Part of the worship always includes ceremonial drinking from a special clay cup called "ṭuwa", or "ṣuwa", which is dedicated to a saint or archangel, and from which the particular mähabbär takes its name (e.g. the "ṭuwa-ef-Gabriel mähabbär). The host has prepared a large "gan" (largest clay jar) of barley beer, which is blessed by the officiating priest. There is also ceremonial breaking of bread, the well-baked kind usually called "dabye", preferably of wheat, and half an inch thick, which, on this occasion, is referred to as "ṭadiq" (lit. offering of righteousness), or as "shellemlämi" (a reference to [531] the cross). This bread is sometimes adorned with in- [554] cised geometric designs. A poor host may substitute the common limp enjära bread, but that would lower his prestige. A rich host or one trying to gain prestige will have carpets spread on theddirt floor, and even the poorest can spread odoriferous grasses and leaves, to give the hut a clean and festive atmosphere.

The members congregate at dusk, some a bit earlier because of the Amhara aversion to travel after sundown. When the confessor-priest is seen to approach, the members rise and redrape their shammas in the symbol

575 796 of going to church. The priest brings the holy water, sprinkles the inside of the hut, and intones prayers. At the proper moments, the members prostrate themselves before the "ṭuwa" cup containing specially blessed barley beer. The "ṭadiq" bread is placed on the wicker worktable ("mässob"), and is then divided by the confessor-priest among the members; the leftovers go to the host's wife who had baked it but who remains modestly in the background. Some of this blessed delicacy is given to the poor. The confessor absolves all present from sins, then passes the "tuwa" around so that everyone can drink from it. Then lots are drawn by means of sticks to see who the next host will be for the "ṭuwa" and "ṭadiq". The ceremonial phase is now over.

[554] Roasted barley ("qolo") and peppery stew ("woṭ") are served in as many varieties and quantities as the host can afford, and many go beyond their means to gain prestige. Drummers and chanters ("azmari") are often hired, and the noisy entertainment is heard in s a wide area, attracting many uninvited guests who sit outside the hut and hope to share in some way in the food or entertainment.

575 Women usually have their own mahabbar sodalities, and usually name them in dedication to some event in the life of the Virgin Mary ("Maryam"). But sometimes women attach themselves to a male mahabbar as a kind of auxiliary, sitting on a mat by themselves in a corner, and tolerated because of their services in preparing beer, bread and stew, or even honored if they are heir-

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men
"brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship
relation which is taken very literally by the more pious.
Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry
the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be
"levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church
as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär inherits
[428] any property left by a deceased member who leaves
no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any relatives
[426 he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar
476] acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker,
making loans to members in financial need by raising
internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar"
memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal
problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers"
and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements
between extended families having eligible youngsters
are often first informally broached by women "sisters",
who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind
of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years
of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

575 561 mahabbar is first founded, the usual pattern of an age group is generally followed, so that young-marrieds, middle-aged, and elders have their own. But since there is great prestige in being admitted to a mahabbar of older persons, partly because of the honor of associating with respected elders, partly for direct economic advantages of belonging to an old, well-endowed mahabbar, boundaries of age do not last long. Elders, on their part, desire to replace vacancies left by deceased members with younger persons, whom they can dominate.

575 [556] Some persons belong to more than one mahabbar, but generally only the relatively well-to-do freehold landowners and traders can afford the expense. It is possible to transfer to another mahabbar, but it is usually not in a person's interest to sever established relationships; human, economic and legal. In case of any difficulty, he has ready bondsmen to act as "wās" (guarantors). Most of all, the rare opportunity to express individual preference in a formal "we-group" creates personal, psychological ties that the average Amhara does not like to forego.

One of the most noteworthy and socially significant aspects of the mähabbär association is the wide variety of functions for which it can be adapted, despite--or perhaps because of--its simple structure. This is in almost complete contradistinction to most other Amhara patterns, which usually evidence a complex hierarchical structure and very specifically regulated functions. In comparison, the mahabbar is little structured.

7. Family and Kinship in Social Organization.

602 The emphasis on the extended family and kin relations among the Amhara can hardly be exagerated. In all problems of life the Amhara first turns to family and kin. While the partilineal-patrilocal extended family is considered of first importance, consanguinal kinfolk on themother's side rank only slightly less in obligation and duties owed by the individual , and in benefits for which he can appeal. In contrast, affinal relationships are regarded as considerably less important [428] in obligations and benefits,. This attitude is reinforced by the traditional law which emphasized inheritance in consanguineal relationships, even distant ones, over [589] closer affinal relatives; and by the relatively easy divorce from the common "semanya" marriage.

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539 Proverbs emphasizing various aspects of kin relations abound and are constantly cited as advice in problems, and in "socializing " and "enculturating" the young:

> "The liar to win over,
> to his brother and sister appeal",

(i.e., do not appeal to the judge, whom the liar may fool; but to his siblings, whom he cannot fool).

> "Quarrels within the kinfolk,
> (are like) insects on cabbage",

(i.e. they do not strike at the root, are not really destructive).

> "Relatives and medicine,
> in days of trouble seek them."

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"When kinfolk aid each other,
no trouble can sever them".

"The needle does not see her own hole
yet it serves her so well",

(said of a man, who, as is common, is generous to his brothers and sisters, yet stingy to his wife and even children).

"When the nose is hit,
the eye begins to weep",

(i.e when one relative is hurt, the others suffer with him).

602 Kin relations give the individual his greatest source of security, psychological and economic, to the Amhara mind, and protect him from the world outside. [574] Therefore, regular and frequent visiting of kinfolk is emphasized; it is one of the most frequent causes of absentiism of Amhara employees. Events of the life cycle (marriages, memorial feasts, etc.) require such visiting. The end of the rainy season is another stimulus. No other association seriously challenges the predominance of kin relations in Amhara society.

A. The Extended Family and Kinship Terms.

596 The extended patrilocal, patrilineal family usually inhabits its own hamlet, farms its own land, allocating it to its biological-nuclear families. Patriarchal elders form an informal council that can be convened in any case of need. This extended family is most typically found among owners of "rest" land

596 (private freehold), most common in the old-Amhara provinces (and in Tigre). [428] "Rest" land is inherited only by sons, not by daughters, except in the relatively rare case when a family short of young men permits a son-in-law to settle in its hamlet, whereupon some land may be inherited by the daughter who is consanguinal kin. Daughters may inherit movables such as cows, sheep, some personal belongings of their mother or father (of the father if there are no sons).

601 Kinship terms do not often differ between terms of address and reference, but often between formal and informal terms which are applied in a variety of ways ranging from authoritarian familiarity to endearments. Differences of gender are also expressed.

The generic term for kinfolk is "zämäd". Consanguinal kinfolk, on both the father's and mother's side, are called "wägän", and if they reside far away and are rarely seen the kinship is re-emphasized by the term "yäsega zämäd" (lit. kinship of one flesh). Consanguinal families sharing the same residential hamlet [178] are called "betä zämäd" (lit. kinfolk of the house). [572] It is noteworthy that in very recent times, in urban areas where kinship functions are somewhat attenuated, the term "zamad" has become extended to include a close personal, though not related, friend.

The affinal relationship is generically called "amachenät", a male affinal relative is addressed and referred to as "amach", a female as "ancha"; whether ego is male or female.

Table 9: Kinship Terms of Special Significance

Formal Term(address&reference)		Informal Address	Function
abbat	father	baba (endearing) (original babytalk)	protective; used also to address elders who are non-related, to beg protection(like a helpless baby).
ennat	mother	tatay (endearing, originally babytalk)	respectful; used also to address unrelated women, to indicate respect by placing them in senior position.
"yännat lej" (lit. my mother's child)	uterine brother		to stress, in reference, the uterine sibling, from among other siblings.
		amatey (lit. my elder mother)	"tatey" can always be used toward consanguinally related women, but an unrelated woman who is married and has born a child should be addressed as "amatey".
ayyat -- ayyay	grandfather		respectful; used also by juniors in addressing elder brother, father, father's brother, mother's brother; also by long-time servant retainers to the master; or to respectfully endear oneself to an unrelated elder.
amita	grandmother	tatay	respectful and endearing; related to "amatey". tatay used only in consanguinal address.

qedem ayyat	great-grandfather (lit. before grandfather)		respectful: usually used only in reference to patrilineal line, or to an unusually famous person in the matrilinnal line.
zär	ancestor	term of referance to	consanguineal ancestor, especially male.
warsa	brother's wife		used by male ego, whom she calls the same. The term indicates mutual inheritance, and "levirate"; ~~but~~ a warsa woman who has born sons and becomes a widow, remains in residence and is thus "inherited" together with her cows.
goban	co-wife, rival (reciprocal temm)		used by Müslim Amharic-speakers, to whom plygymy is permitted.

601 Cousins are simply addressed and referred to as "uncle's child" or "aunt's child", and there is no terminological difference between paternal and maternal uncles. But the informal terms mentioned above are extended to these consanguineal kinfolk for special emphasis of endearment, reapect and protection. For the latter, the address "gashey" is used commonly, and a rarer, more poetic and somewhat archaic term of address would be "ambayē" (my mountain fortress).

Familiarities, teasing or endearing, in address to siblings include "aṗäba" (flower) for endearment to an older girl (sister); "anchi" (Thou, feminine) in teasing address of a girl to a younger, male sibling, otherwise considered an insult; "antä ", (thou, male), in teasing address to a younger sister.

B. Affinal Kin ("amachenät") and Residence.

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574 Affinal relatives, especially the male ego's parents-in-law, must also be visited regularly, at least once every two months in the dry season, or, if they reside too far away, at least twice a year. Gifts, (e.g. a fat sheep) must be brought, and hospitality and a feast can be expected in turn.

606 In popular Amhara opinion, the affinal villain is not so much the mother-in-law, as the step-mother-in-law. [601] Both are addressed respectfully as "amatey" (lit. my elder mother). But it is believed that a mother, desiring her daughter to be happy in marriage, will

606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to "make so much fuss" over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

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628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usually very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

C. Artificial Kinship.

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In view of the emphasis of seeking security in the kinship relation, it is not surprising that Amhara society has formalized several ways of establishing artificial kinship, a process called "zämäd honä".

Adoption is permitted, regulated, mediated, and even encouraged by the church, provided the person or child to be adopted is both Abyssinian Christian, and "aṭṭenṭam" (lit. of good bones; ie. not a negroid Shanqalla or some other foreign race).

There are two degrees of adoption: "breast-parenthood", the complete adoption; and "bread-parenthood" by step-parents.

Full adoption provides a "breast-father" (yäṭuṭ abbat), or a "breast-mother" ("yäṭuṭ ennat"), or both. In the traditional, provincial, public ceremony of adoption, this expression was literally enacted. In the presence of the elders of the kin group, the Confessor, and the c̣heqa shum, the new parent (male or female) coated his or her nipples with honey and simulated breast-feeding, even if the child was already in adolescence. The adoptee was then referred to as "yäṭuṭ lej" (lit. breast child). At the ceremony the new parents swear to make no distinction in treatment between the adopted and the consanguinal children; and the adoptee, if old enough "for reason" (about ages 7 to ten and over), swears to obey his new parents, tend them in sickness, and bury them as would a son.

Reasons forthe adoption of a "breast-child" may

608 be the "mother's" barrenness, or a man's wish to be 597 taken care of in his old age, or both. Obversely, an adolescent orphan may himself take the initiative in selecting a prospective breast-parent, attaching himself to him, ingratiating himself with gifts of honey, etc. After adoption, the "breast-child" is literally considered like a blood relative, and may not marry his new "sibling" -by-adoption.

This prohibition does not apply to the "bread-parent" relation. A bread-father ("anjära abbat"), and bread-mother ("enjära ennat") are considered not truly "artificial kinship" of permenence. It is a step-parent relationship, arising out of divorce and remarriage of parents, or a man's last will asking a close friend to take care of his children, in war or famine, or sickness. Youngsters do not often take the initiative to establish this relationship, for it does not usually provide the security of the breast-parenthood. The proverb says:

[539] "Bread-mother, what will move you?
(you are tough) like a gut!".

608 Another, mild, form of artificial kinship is established to give security and guarantee against ill-treatment to the bride, in the persons of the "mizē", two kinsmen of the groom who take an oath to regard and protect her like a sister in her new residential hamlet.

In the broadest sense, kinfolk also includes the retainer, usually a landless peasant, who has pla-

608ced himself under the protection of a landowning kin group, and injuries inflicted on him thereupon can lead to a blood feud as much as if he were a consanguinal relative.

All these attempts to establish artificial kinship are motivated by the attitude that kinship, even at geographical distance, is greater security than close relations with neighbors even of the same district. The proverb says:

[539] "Your (home) country, where is it?
(It is) Mary's water. (i.e. the womb).
You are my kinfolk!"

8. Attitudes based on Social Stratification

56 Social stratification among the Amhara, as has been shown, is based on land tenure and feudal relations between nobles and peasents; on the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Coptic Abyssinian church; on the ethnic division of skilled labor; on the conquest of border areas and the past subjugation of other ethnic and racial groups; to a lesser degree on age and sex.

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184 Analysis of the human relations and attitudes arising out of this social stratification can be expressed in terms of class; sometimes approaching caste, because very little social mobility has been "open" to ethnic specialists in skilled labor and to

565 racially enslaved groups; there was, and to a consider-
184 able degree there still is, a cultural continuum among
[563] Coptic Amhara that is shared by all classes, (with the
partial exception of ethnic and racially-separated
groups).

A. Class Stratification.

a) Regional Distinction and Feudal Nobility.

Regional distinctions are emphasized by both nobles and peasants. The nobles from the old-Amhara districts of Amara Saynt, Mänz (both in Shoa province) and of the later developed Gondar district (Begemdir province) consider themselves an upper-upper class even among nobility. At least part of this status is ascribed not only to a local history of "old-nobility" contrast with "new-nobility", but totthe supposed fact that these districts were the only Amhara districts not overrun by the Galla in the 16th century.

The class of nobility is controlled, but also perpetuated, by the emperor. In every generation he gradually raises the young nobles to the rank of their fathers, as each individual advances in age. Usually it is only when the father dies that the son is appointed to full rank. He is not usually raised above it except for unusual service to the emperor. Commoners may be given modest ranks in nobility for special service, thus entering, as "new-nobility", upon the social ladder.

565 In the past, the traditional desire for personal independence of the Amhara, particularly the Amhara noble, led him to prefer residence in his own province or district, where he could rule from the apex of local hierarchy. There he imitated the emperor as much as his means permitted.

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854 Children of nobles imbibed the tremendous pride of Amhara nobility from the time servants carried them about so that their noble feet would not be dirtied by walking, or else had their hands and feet washed by servants regularly. Boys, at about 7, would be given a private tutor, usually a young priest. At 10, when other boys are still in rags or at most wear tattered shorts, the young "büläw" (aristocrat) already was wearing full, white jodphurs.

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178 In the provinces this pattern is still largely unchanged. But with the increase in central government power, feudal nobles find it advisable to spend the greater part of the year in Addis Ababa--more than the emperor himself desires. Young nobles who graduate from the provincial elementary schools, where their Indian teachers deferred to them as much as their Amhara teachers, have a considerable adjustment to make when they enter High School in Addis Ababa, where the European instructors grade them on individual merit alone.

b) The Peasant Class.

565 In the peasant class there is a wide distinction between the landowning ("rest") peasants who are freemen

565 ("chäwa") of Amhara ancestry ("aṭṭenṭam"); and the "gabbar" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagär). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations ago, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

[539] "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

563 463 565 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "ṭäbib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference.

563 326 754 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft, the "kayla", who are suspected of withcraft, of being

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754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and [412] suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

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326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which [797] usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

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281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules prevail against them. The stigma against them seems to

533 281 rest not on any supposed supernatural powers of their craft, but on theoccupation which requires them to deal with carcasses regularly, and places them in a class with the "Woyto" hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana. However, the tanned skins produced by these "Faqi" tanners, prepared through a primitve version of making "morocco" leather, ismuch appreciated as "best workmanship" by the rural as well as town Amhara.

Like the Falasha, the "Faqi" live in hamlets of their own, usually within half a day's waling distance of a big market. They are regarded by Amhara as pagans; they gather under large trees in remote areas for their nature worship on several occasions each year. In very recent years, the urgings from the emperor and the example of Protestant missionaries have stimulated the [97] Coptic clergy to admit them to Christianity, but, as in the case of converted Falasha, the social stigma remains attached to the convert, even if he changes his occupation. Socially he is then worse off than before, for as an outcast from his own group he feels the barbs of social discrimination more than ever. In the past, the "Faqi", like the "Falasha" did not concern themselves much about this stigma, but now the "Faqi" insist on the polite address "arabeñña" --which refers to the tanner workmandhip (lit. the one who creates Arab-like, i.e. imported luxury, articles.).

[463] Occupations that can be readily learned by anyone, or that require talent rather than skill, do not connote 533 low class. A musician, "azmari", male or female, who m- or may not play an instrument for accompaniment, is

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill. 286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders [797] from Yemen. As a result, negroid and amei-negroid exslaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Minority

563 567 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, people on the southwest escarpment, or from Nilotic

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". Because of
the negroid features of the former, and the very black
skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not
have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape.
In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was
almost never practiced, and such a document would be
ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to
re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until
slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor,
negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe
of Quara sub-province, just below the western, old-
Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread
[588] that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-
blooded wx-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little
change has so far taken place in their social status.
In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool
ofuunskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to
time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest
parts of theold Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[357] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-
maids, espceially serving the women on the "street of
unattached girls", or by marrying ploygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Christian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore
no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

563 567 797 The racial objection to "raising them to Christinaity" (as it was called) was expressed on the principal of "aṭṭenṭam" (of good, i.e. Amhara or Tigre physical stock). These objections still hold, but ex-slaves attachéd as servants to a Coptic Amhara household are now more often "raised to Christianity" if they desire it, and can then legally marry other Coptic Christians, which, however, is rare, in practice.

567 Plantation slavery was never widespread, except in the lowland, "Käzäga" district of Wolqait sub-province, where cotton and vegetables were raised on a relatively larger scale and most plateau landowners, especially feudal ones, preferred the plentiful "gabbar" services and well-established arrangements. The "gabbar" were rooted to the soil and had more to lose by leaving their birthplace than slaves would have.

The legal position of slaves, who were almost always non-Christianized gave them no protection. They were legal persons, and could not, in theory, own property, nor contract debts. In practice, some occasionally did manage to accumulate some small cattle and raise their local economic level through interpersonal contact. Slave concubines and the children they bore were usually kept in the household like family retainers, or at most given to another kinsman or to a newlywed couple, within the kin group.

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f) The Servant Class and Economic Considerations

The servant class, "ashkär", is employed in the

557 household both in rural areas or towns, also to do
565 plowing for the freehold farmer and help in the harvest.
Servants are usually permanently employed, and therefore do not usually leave even if the employer is behind in his monthly wage payments. Salary and food are received with a bow and cupped hands. The servant addresses the master with the extra polite "gētoch" (lit. masters, i.e. plural), walks in front of the master's mule to make way, slightly behind him when both are on foot, and never lets his master carry anything.

Long interpersonal relations usually improve the position of the servant to master, and it is not in the servant's interest to change jobs, or to go to another area where he is unknown, A landless "gabbar" may try to attach himself to a well-to-do household as "retainer ("zēga"), without wages, doing a servant's work in the hope of occasional, seasonal gifts, a share of the produce, or, in town, a share in trade. For, a servant or retainer who is Amhara "attentam" and Coptic Christian becomes like a member of the extended family. The proverb says:

> [539] "When (women) grind (grain) together,
> there is no mistress".

556 Economic wealth enables each of these social
565 classes to achieve some upward social nobility, within
limits. But there are not many opportunities to accu-
[441] mulate much wealth. Traders can raise their status
in towns, despite doubful ancestry. The same is true
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565 of tailors, a very recent occupation in town, where
foot-operated Singer sewing machines have enabled men

294 565 to set up shops along the main street leading to the market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets, But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[539] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[539] "The water of (the rainy month) Nähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e.he is not appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification andsex stratification.

561 882 The social relation of old toward the young is often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "lejä gärëd"(lit. servant maid, handmaiden).

561 The functions of the young literally follow these 882 terms. Even boys attending church school do pasturing of the flock before and after their lessons, and school is recessed during plowing and harvesting seasons. Elder brothers may and do discipline their juniors, despite the superficial "joking relationship" between siblings of the same sex. As "ashkär", the young bachelor is constantly at the beck and call of his father and other elders of the extended family. At feasts, the father may show affectionate approval by feeding his son hand-to-mouth, the "gursha", also given to servants and other social inferiors.

The proverb admonishes the young man to respect age, and family patriarchs watch jealously a personal friendship developing between any young man with another outside the family:

[539] "More than a trusted companion, who is unlearned, the old teacher is better".

561 Age stratification outranks sex stratification even in matters of religion. An old woman is sometimes permitted to enter the church building, especially if she [565] has taken vows as a nun and wears the "qob". Though the church would like to promote it, social attitudes criticize as ostentatious a young couple of undistinguished, commoner ancestry, who marry by "qurban" (eucharistic marriage) and wear the bright metal crown("aklil"). But a middle-aged couple, long married by "semanya", may take this honorable step without being criticized.

C. Stratification by Sex.

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Stratification by Sex among Amhara affects women of nobility often differently than women of the commoner class, but in some ways it affects both.

Well-remembered and not atypical for noblewomen is the example of Empress Taitu, who married Emperor Menelik as her 5th husband, and who led her own feudal troops into the Battle of Adua in 1896. Such deeds of noblewomen occur often in Abyssinian history. This is not surprising, for the daughters of noblemen are raised by servants with as much deference and prestige as are the sons, and consequently develop equal and even occasionally dominating personalities. Concomitant with the usual literalness in Amhara culture, a noblewoman who fulfills a male function may be addressed in the male gender. The memorial feast ("täzkar") of a noblewoman is as elaborate as that of a nobleman.

A noblewoman is exempt from many disabilities of her sex. She regularly rides a mule, using a man's saddle, and in this case wearing a man'sjodphurs under her long cotton skirts. Unlike other women, she does not have to redrape her shamma respectfully when meeting a man of equal rank, only when going to church or before a judge. When she enters court, the commoner judge rises to greet her. When she approaches the church, the priest bows before her, and may even permit her to stand just inside the door of the outermost enclosure, usually reserved for nuns. A landowning woman-

562 565 which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--may herself become the founder ansponsor of a church. In this case she usually appoints a male administrator from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman, to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect control over the qēs gobäz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed [585] to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye [475] yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual function has to be performed through a male kinsman. Nevertheless, her legal position is by no means as [586] weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman may take half of her husband's movable possessions upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage and half theincreade of any pooled property. To protect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands of her husband, a bride is given two male protective "best men", the "mizēu- but they are kinsmen of the bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out- [854] side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

562 565 293 The commoner woman may not carry a "c̣hera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horsehair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a c̣hera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 888 With advancing age, past menopause, the social position of the commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmä bēt" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesenna" (from "qēs", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 602 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

562 "The killer? (It was) your husband;
602 The victim? (It was) your brother.
[539] Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"

(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[198] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyēt qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)

"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwɔnd amareña" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish

"syētē" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

562 While Amhara men consider women inferior in theory, Amhara women do not necessarily accept this judgement; and, in the case of upper class or advanced age females, men admit that this judgement does not necessarily hold validity in practice.

PART IV : The Life Cycle of the Individual

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Like many other societies with a tradition-directed culture, the individual passing through the age-grades of life is taught well in advance what his duties and privileges are at each stage.

The age-grades, though strongly emphasized in Amhara human relationships, are not as detailed nor as sharply divided from each other as in the case of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia (the "gada" age grades).

[854] The two-year breast-feeding period is the happiest of the
stages for the baby. Infancy and childhood, for both sexes, are
carefree periods of experimentation, which is sharply abrogated
as adolescence, a period of authoritarian obedience, approaches.
[582] Even the first marriage of an individual, taking place at the very
beginning of adulthood (even earlier for girls), permits only a
[586 minimum of individual choice. Unhappy first marriages are common,
587] and so is divorce. But after this, the fully adult man or woman
can assume a freedom of choice not known since childhood. They may
seek second mates, change residence, join a different "mähabbär",
etc., and the grip of extended family on the individual is somewhat
[885] relaxed by the short life-span of the "elder" grade. This in turn
permits the middle-aged adult to be regarded and respected as an
elder himself, who not only is permitted a maximum of own choice,
but who can and does rule the younger grades.

TABLE 10: Age-Grade Terms and Functions, Male and Female

Terms relating to age grades have the following connotations: (Unless otherwise stated, terms are both address and reference).

Stage	Age	Male	Female
nursling	0 - 2	reference: "chacela", or "gelgal"; address: "and ferey lej" (lit. one fruitful child), or "hetsan" (Geez for "baby")	Same
infant	3 - 6 (post weaning)	"lej" (boy) "kutara" (unthinking urchin)	"leja" (girl)
child	over 7	same as in age past weaning (duties: herd cattle, watch harvest)	"leja-garad" (little servant maid) (duties: watch babies, fetch wood).
adolescent	14-20	"ashkär" (lit. servant) (address) (duties: run errands, carry tools, plow, care for cattle)	"gonjo" (lit. beautiful). (chiefly address) (age of serious flirting, braiding of hair, first marriage, first motherhood).
young adult	18-30	address of honor ("gobäz" (handsome (young warrior) ("kobalo" (powerful warrior) (duties: clear bush; defend kin)	
	15-25	"gorämsa" (lit. neighbor, mate) vulgar reference to "mate of vulva"; male at peak of sex desire	"korada" - joking (not very polite) reference to female at peak of sex desire.
adult		"säw (man)	"syet" (woman)
elder	over 40	"shemagelrē" (elder, old man, serious, wise)	"baltet" (greying woman past menopause; age of widowhood; By extension - nun)

1. The Beginning of Life.

842 A. The Desire for Children: adoption.

Children are greatly desired by the Amhara, and a childless home is regarded as under a heavenly curse. Children are regarded as continuing the "byet", the residential extended family; as a source of riches from childhood on when they begin economic tasks; as a source of comfort and security in old age; as defenders in feuds and wars; even after the death of parents, children help them into heaven by means of "*täzkar*".

[588] When a woman is barren, and amulets have proven no cure for her, she may give her husband a concubine, "*gäräd*" (lit. servant maid), so that he will not feel deprived of fatherhood and begin 597 to hate her. Or she may adopt a child, preferably an orphan of kinfolk or a well-known family, by taking the child to the confessor-priest and swearing the oath of ecclesiastical adoption, whereupon the child becomes "*yäcal kidan lej*" (lit. contract-child). This may include the ceremony of "breast-mother", "*yäṭuṭ ennat*", previously described. Less fortunate is the foster child, not formally adopted, who lives with the foster parents, guards the crops and herds the cows, but is more completely dependent on the good will of the "bread mother", "*enjära ennat*".

593 Fathers, whether natural or adopted, expect complete obedience from their children, particularly after they have arrived at the "age of reason". Fathers feel defensively obliged to maintain their authority; as the proverbs say of a father addressing the 593 son:

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> "Sheep! If I do not eat you, you would devour me", said the hyena". (meaning: perhaps you'd

593 [539] like to order me about?).

> "He who talks before his father does,
> his mouth will become like that of a leper".

Older brothers may discipline younger siblings, but there is less emphasis on the privileges of the first-born than in Arab countries. The Amhara is aware that younger brothers may often become more honored, richer and wiser later in life:

[539] "Formerly, he (the older) pulled his (the younger's) ear, later on, the horn of the other (the younger) became bigger".

586 In case of divorce, which is frequent, children not staying with one of the parents are quickly taken by kinfolk. Thus, children are often raised by their grandparents, paternal or maternal, who often are young enough to have small children of their own. It is not even rare to see children of a divorcee by her first marriage may be raised by the family of her second husband even after she has divorced and left him also. This is more likely to happen in a town, where the consanguinal kin ties are weakened due to absence of the factor of kin residence, than in the resiential kin hamlet. (Foreign observers have paraphrased an old English saying and adapted it to this situation in Abyssinia:

B. Pregnancy, Birth, Circumcision.

842 843 According to popular observation, 25% of all women, especially in the towns, are barren, and another 25% have frequent miscarriages. There are many precautions taken against these mishaps. A pregnant woman may wear extra cowrie shells, "zagol"; in addition to amulets written against the evil spirit "tela" (lit. shadow, an envious female spirit) which brings miscarriages, kills babies at

842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.

843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "tärakkäsä" - she has become impure; "räggämä" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädäm nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "näcänät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

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844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("ergus" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "aras" period (usually 80 days) is over. 304 During this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

844 During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adäf" (discharged dirty part), also called "yäengedā lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, women emerge from the huts shouting "ellel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wozäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotam" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wãshäla", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "qurzam" (uncircumcised).

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852 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcized on the 6th day of the month Ṭer. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitorotomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of her sensuality. [831] It is believed that Amhara women of the province of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wäshăla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "mänta" (from "ammännätä", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the twin"? The proverb says: 845 539

"The mother of twins,

845 (because of what she carries) on her

[539] back, she dies."

It would indeed be difficult for her to suckle two babies for two years, and to carry them on her back while fetching water and deadwood and doing all her other chores. Very likely, the weaker of twins is neglected, which greatly increases the higher natural mortality of twins. The observable fact is that one never seems to encounter adult Amhara twins.

C. Naming the Baby.

553 Since Amhara fathers pay little attention to details concerning the unweaned baby, the task of naming the baby, giving it the "world name", usually falls to the mother. She does not usually prepare a name during pregnancy. Instead, she awaits the momentuous event of birth, then decides on a name based on her predominant emotion at that time, or on a significant event occurring at the same time, or on the special wish she has for the personality or the future of her baby. All classes follow this practice, but among nobles there is an additional pattern of naming the baby after a deceased ancestor, particularly in the direct patrilineal line.

551 Common "world names" given by mothers include:

Boys

"Taamrat" - (lit. miracle), e.g. if the mother barely survived the parturition, or some other miraculous deliverance took place.

"Mällāsä"- (lit. he returned), e.g. if the baby's father had been away, and the mother was overjoyed to see him return just at the time the baby was born.

551 "Metekēy" - (lit. my substitute), e. g. if the mother had lost a previous baby, especially of the same (male) sex.

"Seyum" - (lit. the one appointed to dignity), e.g. if the mother has ambitions for the boy. Common among nobles.

"Dästa" - (lit. joy).

Girls

"Almaz" - (lit. diamond)

"Mänän" - (lit. excellent, exquisite, magnificent). Common to nobles.

"Ṭsädal" - (lit. splendor, luster). From the Geez language.

Baptismal names, described earlier, are given by the confessor, sometimes based on the name of a deceased ancestor - especially among nobility - but are not usually used in later life unless or until the person marries by "qurban" ecclesiastical marriage, or becomes a monk or nun. Typical baptismal names are (for boys):

"Gäbrä-Mäsqäl" - (lit. Servant of the Cross)

"Gäbrä-Egziabhēr"- (lit. Servant of God).

D. The long, happy nursling stage.

254 Despite the many physical ailments that endanger the life of a baby in this materially undeveloped country, the nursling stage is one in which it receives more care than at any later period. [853] The long, 2-year breastfeeding, for both boys and girls, gives them some resistance to the effects of malnutrition, vitamin shortage, diarrhea, and infections of all kinds from which older children suffer. The nursling is never out of touch with the body of the mother, or other woman or older sister. Most of the time the baby

854 is carried about on its mother's back, riding spread-legged in a half-sack. Other women and older sisters are about, eager to cuddle and handle the baby ("*dällälä*") to console, comfort, caress). In doing this they bend down to the baby, or pick it up, but rarely grasp it to kiss it. Fathers rarely fondle the baby until it is weaned. They often have to take a special count when asked how many teeth the baby has.

The term for nursling, "*golgäl*", may be extended to animal nurslings as a compliment, but not vice versa, for this would be an insult. When the baby can sit or stand, mothers hold it by the hands and coo babytalk to it, e.g. "*tatu segra*" (lit. - footsie), encouraging it to take first steps, or warning it not to touch a dangerous thing, such as fire, by designating it as "*kaka*". The
853 baby learns to walk during the second year, long before it is weaned. Thus a baby with a nearly full set of teeth can be seen walking up to its mother, groping for the breast inside the dress or toga, pulling it out, and beginning to take nourishment while squeezing a side of the breast with the full hand. The mother will rarely push it away, until it has had its fill and lingers dreamily, and she has other work to do. In this case the mother may push the baby away gently, without sign of annoyance. Inside the hut, women are not bashful about their breasts being partly ex-
[854] posed during feeding, but in sight of a stranger they may cover the process of the baby's taking nourishment for fear of evil-eye spirits to which every eater is vulnerable and which might dry up the milk (out of envy and meanness).

803 Toilet training begins gradually after weaning, i.e. after the age of two, when the mother has resumed full wifely duties and

803 does not wish to be dirtied all the time. Misbehaving, relapsing infants are punished by pinching.

2. The Age of Experimentation: Infancy and Childhood.

855 The years after weaning, until about the age of seven can be described as years in which the attitude of Amhara parents and society toward the small children is "laissez-faire". This is partly due to the attitude that views childhood as a state of imperfection, letting the children grow with little supervision until they are old enough to perform economic tasks, but later training them in an authoritarian fashion, to make them grow into adults as quickly as possible, without an intervebing playful adolescence.

A. The Stage of Infancy.

854 Once the mother has resumed wifely duties, infants are often cared for by their older sisters, who attend to their food, carry them, fondle them, but leave them considerable freedom to roam around the outside of the huts and nearby brooks, hills, fields, etc. They are permitted to get as dirty as they like, and are dressed in a single shift of threadbare rags which conceal nothing. They are not scolded for experimentation with objects, be they animate, inanimate, or their own bodies; unless they get in the way of adults and annoy them, whereupon they are simply pushed away. They are rarely punished, for they are regarded as not having attained the "age of reason", as "not yet trainable", as "urchins" ("kutara"), lighthearted infants.

Parents do fondle them, but not as regularly as before. It

854 is a special occasion when father lets the infant ride on his
shoulders ("ashkokko alä", lit. rode like a marmoset monkey) while
going to visit another hamlet. Men do not carry children on their
[165] backs, women's fashion. But parents, particularly fathers, do not
take infants too seriously for an additional reason, that of infant mortality which is still high at this stage.

857 Socialization and enculturation begin through the peer-group of playmates, with whom infants have the most frequent, lengthy, and intensive contacts. They tease each other and scold each other into what they, in their playful, experimenting fashion, regard as "proper" behavior; and penalize, haze and discipline each other in the same way. From the adults they take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities, organize them experimentally into child-culture version of their own; for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object.

854 There is a cooperative side to this apparently random play
857 activity, leading to the beginning of useful economic activities.
861 Older children teach the younger ones, e.g., to make little whisk-brooms ("wof ger", lit. bird's foot) out of reeds, for which they are rewarded by their mothers with a thick, cake-like bread(similar to "dabye" of monks), which carries the same name, "wof ger". On certain church holidays, particularly "Buhe", younger children accompany older ones on their gift-begging tours.

857 Their powers of observation, active, free and relatively un-
867 structured prior to later discipline, imitate, in their play activities, the social relations, including the family and sexual-social relationships of their elders. When about five years old,

857 boys and girls - for the sexes are not yet separated up to that
867 time - play "house" with considerable sophistication. For example, when they play "marriage", the "father" of the "bride" goes to the "elders" to inquire about the character of the "groom", after the groom's father has initiated the negotiations on the groom's request. They build a "marriage hut", and play at heavy drinking of barley-beer and honey-mead. The "bride" demands a gift from her new "husband", and enters into his "residence". After they have been in there a while, the two best-men, the "mizē", who had been duly sworn to protect her even against her husband, go off to the bride's parents to announce loudly and joyfully that the girl had proven a virgin! Whereupon the "mizē" are feted.

B. The Stage of Childhood, "Reason" Incipient Discipline.

857
868 There is no special rite of passage that marks entry into the
855 next stage, at about 5 for girls, about 7 for boys. But there is
recognition, at this point, that the girls mature faster and are
economically useful at a younger age than boys. Henceforth, girls
[291] play with girls, follow their mothers in their duties, (watch
babies, fetch wood) and wear a more complete shift that covers
them better; while boys play in boys' groups, follow their fathers,
have regular duties assigned them such as taking cattle to and
from pasture, and guarding the harvest against birds and baboons.
Girl-children are addressed and referred to as "leja-gäräd" (ser-
vant maid) for their duties are even more regular than those of
[858] the boys. Both sexes can now be asked in court to choose sides
when their parents are being divorced and the guardianship is in
question. For they have entered the "age of reason".

855 Neglect of duty is therefore punished, and a father may fly into a sudden rage, beat the child without waiting for an excuse, even hurl a firebrand at the offending boy, so that considerable injuries sometimes occur. Mothers discipline the girls in similar temperamental fashion. But the rage, in either case, is quickly forgotten. There is no pattern of cold discipline, no "woodshed" punishment, rather hot-tempered, quick retribution.

857 Play activity and imitation of adults continues, but it takes on more seasonal and constructive characteristics. This is partly due to the seasonal pattern of the economic activities of boys age 7 to 11 and girls 5 to 14. Formal education in church school rarely begins before 11 in the rural areas, whereupon their play activities become more "extra-curricular".

[526] The seasonal games include the ball game after the harvest is completed, known as "*gencheb*" or "*kwas*", and seasonal construction and repair activities. On the church feast of *Mikael*, little boys have their own outdoor party, eating barley roasted on the stalk, and watching the flirtatious play of adolescent boys and girls.

291 Boys 7 to 11 still wear the tattered, knee length cotton shift, as their basic garment in rural areas, but beg a new one from relatives once a year, for the holy day of "*Mäsqāl*", or "*Timq̣ät*". But they are increasingly self-conscious about nudity, and if the tattered shift reveals the pubic area, other boys will haze and playfully beat the offender, saying:

[539]
> "My father told me not to let a snake warm itself in the sun".

865
867 In summary, parental discipline in this age group is specific, work-oriented and intermittent; while experimentation with, and

855 socialization by the peer group continues more regularly and frequently and on a broader range of activities.
867

C. Training through the Peer-group; Patterns of Hazing.

867 Parental training during childhood is minimal, and much of enculturation is left to the peer-group which proceeds to function in little-structured fashion, largely through hazing.

Differential behavior of the sexes is largely taught this way. Little boys haze any boy who cries, or seems soft, "qelṭan", by darkly hinting that he "lacks something" ("täqäraṭṭälä"); and, if he is shy in talking and defending himself with his sharp tongue, "q̣ämtalla", effeminate. To prove their physical bravery, boys burn scars ("ṭässasa") in their own forearms, saying that this will make them "strong", and believing that this will immunize them from showing pain or softness in public. An aggressive, clever [562] tongue, capable of a wide repertoire of insults that will shatter the adversary's composure, and also include appropriate milder and semi-strong insults, is regarded as male behavior, as "strong" or stronger than brawn. This makes a "known man" ("yätäwaqa säw"). The proverb says:

[539]

> "The son of man, by what is he respected?
> by his seat (position)?
> Not by his seat -
> by his lip. (i.e. cleverness in argument)".

Boys are hazed by other boys for picking on little girls. Hazing is sometimes physical, sometimes by mockery, often both. If physical, it consists of shoving, wrestling, in spontaneous manner, almost never with cold formality. A boy who wants to grow up too fast beyond his peers, i.e. by showing too much preference for the company of elders, is criticized with the proverb:

867 "He, before becoming old,
wants to be serious".

[539] (This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "qobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less vilent,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a [264] "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right [576] hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping [514] themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair
302 style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

867 [309] lock in addition. But boys never wear the ring of hair, which would be insulting to them.

864 When sex differentiation becomes more emphasized in the culture, at about seven, sex talk and sex play goes on primarily within the peer group of the same sex. The invitation to do this is "enkä ṡälantiye", (lit. let us play at guessing impolite matters). They play hide and seek, whisper, re-enact what they have observed their parents do at night in the hut, and phantasy experimenting with sexual possibilities. Children observe a lot in the quiet of the night in the hut, but are careful not to be seen watching. They misunderstand and are greatly puzzled, since no elder will explain "impolite matters" to them. It is impolite even to mention the names of genitals and reproductive organs, such as "kola" for penis, and "ems" for vulva, so they are merely whispered about. In church school, boys are puzzled by overt references to "Mary's womb" and "God's seed", but questions are rejected as "rudeness". Youngsters in town have broader information, because there they hear "rude" talk more often among adults.

D. Toys and Games.

857 524 The economic activities of children in the fields, where they spend much time in guarding but do little intensive labor, is regarded by them more in the nature of play. It is fun to throw rocks at thieving baboons and shoot pebbles at birds, with slingshots made of "nac̣ha" fiber.

The boys also make a bullroarer, "mät", to scare birds away from seeds and mature crops. This instrument is also called, onomatopoetically, "guremrenosh" (from "tägwerämärrämä", to

857 grumble, growl, snarl). It consists of a stick of wood, a foot
524 long, 1/2 inch thick, notched at the thinner end, to which a cord of twisted fibre is attached. This is swung horizontally, above the head, to produce what is regarded as a terrifying sound. It is even used in shepherding, since boys believe it frightens away hyenas and the occasional leopard. During the rainy season, boys play it indoors to amuse each other and haze-tease younger siblings, who are frightened by it.

At the beginning of the light rainy season, when the storks and other birds fly north, children especially girls, form circles and dance rounds, chanting to the flocks of birds:

[539]

"Stork, our country is well;
the woman who baked *qitta* (luxurious wheat bread)
has died swallowing *qitta* (i.e. luxury is plentiful).

[825] At harvest time, in November, similar greetings are sung to the birds when they return from the north, from "Jerusalem" in popular belief. The Falashas children express this by singing to departing storks:

[539]

"How are you?
The people of Jerusalem (Falashas) are well)."

The Coptic Amhara hold the same belief as to the destination of the birds.

Winter games, i.e. in the rainy season, when children are restricted to the hamlet, include building of makeshift huts, in which they play "man and wife". The girls gather leaves, roll red mud inside, and "bake" cakes. Boys mimic the farmer, weave a hood of reeds, and just as he walks in the rain broadcasting his seeds, so boys broadcast pebbles.

Swimming is a favorite sport of children in the rainy season, 857 524 868 when even brooks are swollen, but rivers soon become too dangerous. During the first season, when they learn to swim, a rope is tied around the child's waist and held by an adolescent or young adult. At this time boys make waterpistols, "tiqqosh" with a bamboo syringe; also peashooters shooting small pebbles with a bamboo strip acting as spring. Boys also make panpipe flutes from stout reeds, in preparation for "spring".

E. Formal Education and Extra-curricular Activities.

872 Basic education, already described in connection with the church, now falls into two types: the traditional church school; and the modern-style elementary school. Overlaps are beginning to appear.

Until a generation ago, the traditional church school had a complete monopoly on education, and for the vast majority of all children this is still true at this writing. It resembles in structure and function the "kuttab" school of the Muslims. Boys of peasant parents usually do not enroll before the age of 11, for until then their economic services are utilized fully, and only when they approach adolescence are the needs for their education felt by parents.

874 Most of the boys attend church school for only three years, for if they wish to study beyond what the village priest can teach them they must leave home for another district or province, e.g. a monastery school. Since the peasant family usually cannot or does not wish to sponsor this, the boy who insists becomes a "wandering" student, begging his way. Usually he goes for "zēma"

874 studies to places in Begemdir province (Gondar), for "*qenyē*" to Gojjam province. He stays there until he receives his certificate, to work as a "däbtära" scribe; if a persistent student he may try to obtain ordination into the priesthood, or, if lackadasical, make it a life-long occupation to go from school to school, begging his way, learning how to pursuade village women to give him food for a "blessing", and how to fend off dogs with a stout staff. Sometimes, when free food is scarce, he works at semi-skilled occupations such as basket-weaving and weaving sun-umbrellas, selling them at the market. Parents, fearing that this might be the outcome of his "education", discourage boys from leaving home and field.

872
874 The 3-year attendance at the local church school is regarded as highly desirable by both parents and the church, and most boys - but no girls - attend it. When the boy enrolled there has learned to read portions of liturgy or the Bible in the Geez language, chanting psalms and gospels out loud, the father rewards the priest-teacher by sending him a sheep or a goat, sometimes even an aged cow or old ox. The priests often charge their older students with teaching the younger ones, in exchange for special privileges.

855 Boys misbehaving, such as making errors or not fully participating in the chanting in unison, or asking questions considered impious, are punished immediately by twisting of the ear or slaps on the head.

The methods of teaching are frequent repetition of lessons, learning by rote, chanting of memorized lessons. Translation into Amharic is rarely taught at this level, and writing almost never (until very recently in some locations under central government influence). The priest-teacher usually exerts greater efforts toward

872 children of generous parents, and punishes and quite overtly
874 neglects children of poorer parents. Probably not more than 20%
of the boys attend with regularity, but absentees may be punished.

872 The modern elementary school is available only at provincial capitals, and the nation's capital (the latter contains also high schools and a college). The curriculum of the elementary schools is now patterned after the American model, with Amharic and religion taught by Amhara teachers and priests, and other subjects, including English from the 3rd grade on, taught by imported teachers from India (also Europeans in Addis Ababa itself). Equipment includes blackboard ("sälēda") and chalk, but few printed books.

During the past decade, overlaps have been developing. Some church schools now also teach elementary arithmetic and Amharic writing, which the new law requires, though most in a minimal fashion or not at all. Arithmetic uses Amharic numerals, and more recently, also Arabic numerals. The first steps in this modernization had been ordered by Menelik II, but the change is still far from complete. Conversely, the students enrolling in elementary schools of provincial capitals are usually not younger than 11, as in the old tradition. Graduates of the 3-year village church school may enter in the 3rd grade of the modern elementary school, but are usually older than their classmates, so that they are 20 years old at graduation. This is often found in provincial capitals.

Only during the past decade have several girls' elementary schools been founded in some provincial capitals.

872 Since elementary schools, though increasing in number, still
565 constitute the major bottleneck in education, demand exceeding
supply, (while high schools are more nearly sufficient because of
fewer applicants), sons of officeholders and feudal lords find it

872 565 easier, in practice, to gain admittance. The efforts of the emperor to give opportunities to the rural sons of poor orphans of soldiers who died fighting for their country, by opening boarding houses for them, attached to elementary schools, were defeated by the provincial feudal lords and townspeople, who managed to have their sons quartered in them instead.

Thus, traditional social stratification, both class and ethnic, affects even the modern elementary schools. In 1952 about 60,000 children, 10% girls, attended modern elementary schools in Ethiopia, [563] and far more than half this number was Amhara. Ethnic minority groups find it very hard to have their children admitted, because the school administrators are usually Amhara. Thus, the Qemants of Gondar, for example, have found it easier to enroll their sons in the Catholic mission school operated there by Tigrean(Eritrean) priests. Other ethnic minorities have enrolled children in 7th Day Adventist and other mission schools.

871 184 565 In Addis Ababa itself the situation is quite different, however. Here, traditional social stratification has far less effect, partly because of the closer supervision by more modern officials of the central government, partly because the teachers in the high schools, and even in part in the elementary schools, are Europeans or Americans who emphasise social equality among students, pay no attention to family nobility, and reward only merit. Here, the son of the illiterate peasant, or occasionally even ex-slave negroid Shanqalla, may sit next to the son of an Amhara duke or a Galla "balbat". After graduation, they may be sent abroad for college or postgraduate training, based on merit, regardless of parental rank; though in social and family life the traditional social cleavages prevail!

000 prevail.

871 465 Most elementary school graduates from the provincial capitals do not continue to Addis Ababa for a high school education, for they can obtain good and honorable positions, paying ETH$125.- (US $50.-) per month in the same town, as teachers, municipal clerks, with a good chance to be appointed to judgeship soon if they cultivate the right persons in power with "daj tenat". Even Students who "flunk out" in the 7th or 8th grade can earn ETH$100.- as teachers of lower grades, or as low-grade clerks.

872 212 178 One old tradition which has broken down in the modern elementary schools but not in most church schools, is the prohibition of extra-curricular writing. In the higher church grades, in which students' piety was already confirmed, especially in the monastery schools, copying psalms, gospels, (and by extension, government documents), was permitted, practiced, even regarded as praiseworthy. But there was, and in rural areas still is, fear that less pious students would use their knowledge of writing to experiment with magical formulae, doodlings, etc., creating dangerous mischief.

Therefore, parchment goatskins and writing equipment were carefully kept away from students of village church schools, and they were not taught to write. Thus, achievement of the skill of a scribe, "däbtära", required considerable individual initiative and study away from home.

212 857 However, boys at the "experimental" age of childhood, would amuse themselves with the forbidden game of writing and doodling in secret, and they still do. Their work can be seen scribbled even on the outside walls and posts of some churches, a daring prank, sometimes in imitation of the church painter. More often

212 857 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates, particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or [524] speaking phrases of Geez. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question)	What is two?
(Reply)	Udder of female donkey;
(Question)	What is four?
(Reply)	Udder of cow."

[198] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up "secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between syllables and speaking rapidly (such as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father, is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided, no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random, and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule" conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

882 broken by bursts of frenzied activity. This is utilized by the adults both to enculturate them and bend them to their will in "training" and "service", and to use the boundless physical energy of adolescents for considerable chores of physical labor.

The adolescents do not resent this most of the time, for they accept it as flattery and acknowledgement of their growing strength; enjoy the increased attention given them in the family as full-fledged, if subordinate members; appreciate the higher status that comes with advancing age, symbolized by the obedience they themselves can command at this stage from their younger siblings who follow them like retainers follow a feudal lord.

A. The Male Adolescent: Service and Young-Warrior.

882 561 The terms of address at this stage symbolize his position exactly, and are far more significant than in reference. Terms of address used in everyday life are: "ashkär" (lit. servant), to call a young man to duties ranging from running errands to doing most of the plowing. First used as flattery for boys of about 14, it becomes exactly descriptive and in everyday use as he matures to full stature power. When this happens, at about age 18, he may be flatteringly addressed as "gobäz", signifying "handsome young warrior". (footnote 79).

883 Duties at this stage, under supervision of the father or other male kinsman, include responsible and hard work in agriculture,

[[71]] Footnote 79: "gobäz" in Amharic has similar connotation to "bahurim" in Hebrew: the identification of the concept of young man with young warrior (Isaiah 31:8, Jeremiah 18:21, Amos 4:10). This is pointed out by Ullendorffe: The Obelisk of Matara, p. 31.

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539]
> "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).
>
> "A village full of young men
> in one year it will become a desert".
>
> "A young chief;
> fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882
831 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" akalä mätän därräsä (lit. he

882 831 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an expression not considered polite. So is the term "gorämsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "mate".

883 [561] At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "kobäle" (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "kobälo" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalchal jebo" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw shebo" crow's beak) symbolizing 883 526 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the "Ṭemqät" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

883 526 the turn of their fortunes with excited comments whispered in their own groups. They know that the game will be discussed in individual terms until late into that night, for this is the month of intensive flirting and marriage.

At Christmas, the hockey-like game called "gänna" is played, where the team is emphasized over the individual, unlike "guks". In fact, Christmas derives its popular name, "Gänna", from the game, rather than the proper "Ledät" (lit. "birthday" of Jesus). The "fukkara" boasting, accompanied by chant and little jig-dance while holding a spear or rifle horozontally over the shoulders, is a major kin event, performed by respected and fully-grown "gobäz" at weddings and other formal family events, to recount the past heroic deeds of members of the extended family.

All these roles played by the male adolescent as he approaches and reaches young manhood complete his individual socialization, and reward him with the full attention and acknowledgement given him by his society.

B. The Adolescent Female: Informal Courtship in the Annual Cycle.

882 From puberty until she has settled as a housewife and mother, the female adolescent is addressed as "qonjo" (lit. beautiful), a flattering and honorific address used in everyday language, much as "gobaz" for young men. This address designates her new status, the attention given by all to her blossoming out, her increased status in the family as a young person, and her duties of responsibility rather than mere menial routine labor of the younger "leja-gäräd". If the latter term is still used, it is often in opprobium, or in reference if she is not present.

883 The random play activity of younger girls gives play to more structured activities. Girls still work and play in groups but seek to meet groups of young men somewhat older than themselves. Flirting becomes patterned and self-conscious, and behavior in the presence of elders more subdued. Aggressive playfulness, disregarded often before puberty, is severely criticized henceforth.

883
584 Saturday afternoons are preferred times for the gathering of "qonjo" girls, for they then go greater distances into the bush to fetch firewood for Sunday. Usually the girls, age 13 to 16, sing loudly so as to attract the group of young men, age 15 to 20, who thereupon follow them at a certain distance. From time to time, the girls, leading the boys on, stop, and dance around like playful little girls, alternately holding each other by the hand, or spinning like a top. This is a signal to the boys to approach, as if by accident, and couples begin to break off from the group to go for a "shershsher", a promenade, while still gathering deadwood. Since the boys are from nearby hamlets, the youngsters and their parents know each other.

584
796 In the annual cycle of events, three occasions are utilized as landmarks of opportunity in serious flirting, informal courtship, leading to the rapidly ensuing first marriage of the adolescent girl.

The first occurs on "Mikaēl", St. Michael's day, on the 12th day of the month of Hedar, which is celebrated as a kind of Thanksgiving day, for it falls just after the major harvest is completed, in late November. For all ages it is a day of picnics, out in the open, under a bright sunny sky in the first part of the dry season, before the green grass is entirely scorched yellow. Togas have been

584 796 freshly washed. The day begins with chanting in the church at dawn, parading of the local "tabot" of Mikaēl, accompanied by the "ellel" joyshout of the women. Large shelters ("dass") are set up in the open, about noontime, and feasting and beer drinking continues until the late evening.

This day is awaited and prepared for by the adolescent girls who have just concluded their task of watching the harvest from elevated platforms guarding the maturing crop. On this day they use the platforms as shelters, under which they invite their boy friends. The girls bring live chickens, the boys kill them, pronouncing the religious formula over the chickens. The girls then cook them in earthenware pots with appropriate spices and pepper, thus advertising their abilities in cooking and houswifely arts. The girls wear a fresh hairdo, often pomaded (sometimes for the first time) with "*ades*" - boiled and perfumed butter; their palms reddened with "*ensosela*" like a grown woman, and lemons and"*edes*" odorific branches in the folds of their freshly washed heavy cotton frocks. Prepared in this fashion, they begin to attract the boys even while the elders are still in church during morning services. A group of girls will gather within sight of the churchyard, shouting "ellel" at the proper times, dancing their girlish rounds. As soon as they can, the young men thereupon detach themselves from the churchyard or outer enclosure, surround the girls, and feel out their individual popularity by teasing and tickling their chosen girls with olive branches. If a girl agrees to consider a boy, she gives him a lemon or an "ades" branch, which invites him to a "shershsher" at her platform-shelter.

The second annual occasion presents itself on the biggest out-

584 door event of the year, the church parades on Epiphany ("Ṭemcät"),
796 in connection with the "guks" tournament of the young men. Dressed up in holiday fashion, the "qonjo" girls eagerly follow the fortunes of their preferred boy friends. When no elders are within hearing, some girls direct teasing shouts of encouragement at the young men, even occasionally "ellel" (reserved for church ritual earlier that day). This day is the climax of the informal courtship - serious flirting season, in mid-January.

The third and final occasion occurs on Easter, "Fassika", at the very end of the dry season, just before social activities move indoors. For this holy day, the girls have once more washed their
[302] garments despite the shortage of water, reddened their palms, prepared the hairdo. Everyone is in a happy mood, for the long lenten season is over, and meat is consumed in greater quantities than at any other time. There is an element of urgency in social relations, for this is the second and final marriage season, and soon all social life and kin visiting comes to an end for four long, dreary, rainy, chilly months.

It is on the basis of such informal courtship, climaxed on these three annual occasions but continuing in-between, that a young man requests his father to initiate negotiations for marriage by sending an intermediary to the girl's family. If the match seems suitable to the elders, negotiations begin.

4. Adulthood and Marriage: Dominance of the Kin.

582 A girl's first marriage nearly always takes place before she is fully adult, physically as well as in maturity of character; while the bridegroom, though also young, is physically adult and in

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597
608 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mizē") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("*säw*") and woman ("*syēt*") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "*acmä adam*" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "*acmä hawan*" for woman (from Geez for "Eve), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobäz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

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A. Marriage Patterns

There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patqi, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

583 585 1) the eucharistic church marriage, "qurban", engaged in only by a minority, such as some of the nobility, some of the older persons, and all of the priesthood; 2) the kin-negotiated ("civil") marriage, "semanya", sworn before the cheqa shum headman, and most [588] common; 3) the temporary marriage, for which the man engages to pay regular housekeeping wages, "damoz", especially common among those who travel to markets.

585 "Semanya" literally means "80", and is thus also called the "eighty-bond marriage". This refers to the oath which includes the phrase "May the Emperor die", perjury against which used to be penalized by what was then the enormous sum of 80 Maria Theresa Thalers. It is also called "bäserat", by"contract"). This is the most common form of marriage, dominated by a complexity of kinship arrangements (described in detail below), and divorce is possible through similar negotiations and "parcelling out" of both goods and children. There is a minimum of individual emphasis in this marriage negotiation, especially in a first marriage, for the kin of both sides must be satisfied and "honored", though there is some element of original choice through informal courtship. The church takes cognizance by sending a priest to [illegible]s the couple.

"Qurbān" marriage is not urged by the church on laymen, partly because of the sacerdotal character of the church, partly because the eucharistic sacraments are considered so holy that only serious, [586] mature, fully adult persons are advised to engage in it, and divorce cannot be granted. At this sacrament, the couple is rebaptized, and [587] may, on all church holy days, wear the "aklil" crown. Widows and widowers may remarry, but a priest who becomes a widower is expected to assume monkhood. The priest who blesses a "semanya"

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

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487 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "dämïwäz" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") [465] compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but [675] now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them
548 the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("ṭej-byot"), and are therefore much more respected.

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487
178 Respectably-married ("semanya") men would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

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848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("yac̣hen gared"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588
171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "sighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nagäst" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognized in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

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585 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban" though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
602 peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nagäst" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583
184 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

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Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

583 184 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official. After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 656 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in [584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 871 581 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

178 581 871 husbands "Who are you to give me orders - I can read as well as you". Therefore such girls are avoided as brides.

But fully educated young men, in Addis Ababa, especially those who have returned from abroad with graduate degrees, complain that there are not enough educated girls for them to marry. There is now a girl's high school in Addis Ababa, but the supply of educated girls is still far below the demand by educated men who do not wish their wives to sit shy and wordless in modern-urtan, international social gatherings.

Another modern difficulty arises in cases where the modern-educated young man is the son of an illiterate peasant, or a "rustic" one, and is ashamed to ask his father and similar kinfolk to negotiate the marriage. For even in the city the traditional "semanya" is the basic and most common form of marriage.

584 a) "Semanya" Marriage Negotiations.

Sometimes the young man decides on a girl and asks his father to begin negotiations. Or the parents, feeling that the time has come, begin to send out feelers. In either case, it is the young man's father who initiates formal negotiations with the father and kinfolk of the bride; though not, at first, directly.

The father of the young man may gather his "enjära"-friends, "who dine at each other's table", or kinsmen, or both, and appoint a "näggär abbat" (lit. father of the affair) as intermediary.

Before matters go further, the kin group tries to find out and examine three factors of the prospective match:
1) Health of the family, such as absence of leprosy, venereal disease and other diseases belived to be inherited; 2) Land property -

584 preferably "rest" freehold, size of kin group and their relations and reputation, and cattle that might be asked for to match the contributions of the groom's kin; 3) "attentam" (lit. of good bones) - the question whether the kin are of "good stock", and not in part descended from non-Amhara, especially not from slave stock such as Shanqalla or Barya.

Once this is ascertained to satisfaction, the "näggär abbat" embarks on a series of visits to the house of the bride's father, speaking with great politeness, some flattery, putting him in a good mood, speaking in general terms, making philosophic observations, quoting appropriate proverbs in the conversation.

After this visit has been repeated, without any specific request, the host begins to realize that a very serious matter is at hand. He usually guesses what it is, but waits until the visitor, who is usually accompanied by one or two kinsmen or close friends, says: "We came to ask a serious matter; if you permit us, we shall speak of it". Permission granted, the "naggar abbat" continues: "We came to seek your kinship, your daughter and our son, so-and-so". Since it is impolite to refuse outright, and, on the other hand, not "proper" to give one's child away too readily, the host replies: "Let me consult with my kinsmen". Later, he can refuse or procrastinate by saying: "She is yet too young". When they come again the next year, he can say: "Someone else has preceded you, and I have accepted the initial gift". The latter is a small token of little value, serving mainly to indicate symbolically that the girl is spoken for.

If the kinsmen on both sides agree to the match, the "naggar abbat" and companions, on succeeding visits, begin negotiations

584 about the economic arrangements to which both sides contribute equally, for "honor"; for setting up the couple on a sound economic basis; and to assure property to the bride in case of divorce or widowhood. "Semanya" marriage among Amhara usually begins on an economic basis of half-and-half ("*bal ekkul*") contributions from both kin groups. The kinsmen of the bride would be ashamed to accept more of dowry (*macha*) for her than they are able to contribute, lest she be treated disrespectfully by the groom's kinfolk later on who might say: "She was bought like a "damoz", whenever there is a wu[illegible]. For there is no lobola custom in the one-sided African way. Conversely, a man who marries for cows is mocked:

[539]
> "Seeing her cattle, he married a bad one;
> when the cattle died,
> his trouble was double".

583 Cows are usually the major item of discussion of property changing hands at marriage. Negotiations finally fix the number of cows each will contribute ("*kābetesh bäkābtē*") (lit. "your property is mine"), usually payable gradually as down payment and in installments, as a further guarantee that the marriage is working out and that there are no complaints (e.g. that the bride actually proved to be a virgin as promised).

Even a poor peasant will try to beg and borrow among his kin, lest he be shamed, so that he can match the dowry of the in-laws with 3 to 5 cows. A rich farmer may give as many as 30 cows to his child, thus requiring the in-laws to match this. A stubborn father can use this means to discourage a match that his youngster has set his heart on; knowing full well that the in-laws, if not rich

583 enough to match him, will be ashamed and cancel the match at this point to save face, while no one can really blame the "generous" father. As a result, most weddings take place on the same economic level.

A really kind father can, however, reduce the number of cows he officially promises, to enable the poorer in-laws to match it. A desparate youngster running up against a stubborn father sometimes appeals to the kinfolk of his or her mother for cows, but this is usually more difficult to obtain, for cows contributed by the patrilineal-patrilocal kin remain in the same hamlet while matrilineally contributed cows are taken out of the hamlet.

Other gifts set down in the dowry, before witnesses or in writing, include new shammas (togas), new jodphurs("surri"), perhaps some donkeys, and a mule. In the case of noblemen, gifts include embroidered shirts, silver crosses for the bride's necklace, gold and silver rings, silver hairpins, a "burnos" (hooded, black woolen coat), a kaba (mantle of woolen or imported chints cloth), an imported, foldable umbrella. In the past, gifts to the groom included a fine rhinoceros shield with gold-plated ornaments, spears, a rifle, oxen, a good horse, slaves (before abolition), mules, embroidered garments, embroidered saddle, etc. Since then, some of these tradional gifts have been replaced by city and imported items, bought in the Armenian and Greek shops of Addis Ababa, but provincial Amhera are resisting some of these intrusions, (pushed by traders), saying that it should not appear that the bride is bought.

584 While kinship prestige and economic arrangements are considered of primary importance in the "semanya" marriage, once these nego-

584 tiations are concluded, preparations are made to ensure the spiritual and emotional well-being of the couple. A bridegroom is warned to study the character of his prospective mother-in-law, for it is believed that her daughter will take after her:

> "Observe her mother,
> before you let the daughter enter (the house)."

584 608 But the importance of the sworn best men, the "*mizē*", in protecting the bride after the marriage, is considered even more important, due to the patrilocal residence. They are called the protectors of her "teeth and arms", ready to rush to her aid even against the husband when she shouts for help. On the other hand, to balance the situation, they are chosen from among the groom's closest relatives, e.g. first cousins (patrilineal), so that they won't be likely to seduce the girl. The two "mize" have to take the vow of excommunication before the "*mänfäs gubaē*" (lit. soul counsel) priest, in front of the parents of the girl and the groom, that they will regard her as a sister, that they will treat her as their own sisters, that they will come night or day when she calls. This formal, literal bond of artificial kinship is strong, and the bride affectionately addresses the "mize" as "gashey" (lit. my shield, i.e. by protector) much as she would an uncle or other grown kinsman. The proverb says:

[539]

> "For confession - go to the priest,
> for (selfless) love - go to the mize".

These "mize" become protectors not only of the bride, but, in consequence, of the marriage of the couple. For, if the groom needs a "wās", a personal guarantor-bondsman for employment or if in legal trouble, the mize can hardly refuse this service as they are now doubly bound. The mize pattern thus increases security and stability

584 608 for all concerned, and is reinforced by the public social sanction given the "swearing - in".

b) "Semanya" Wedding Procedure

585 The wedding consists largely of a formal recapitulation of all the negotiations in public, by the two kingroups involved, sometimes at considerable length, confirmed in a monosyllabic expression from bride and groom. The other major activities are feasting in both hamlets involved, a re-enactment of bride capture at nightfall, and the signs of virginity signifying that the "fortress is just taken".

The preferred day for weddings is Sunday, so that the deflowering, taking place after nightfall which is considered part of Monday, will not take place on the Lord's day. (footnote 82). For the same reason, weddings do not take place on Saturday; nor in lent, a period of mourning; nor on Wednesday or Friday fast days.

Preparations for feasting and gathering are made at both hamlets involved. At both places a "dass" shelter is erected on a square staked out with tall saplings, covered with leafy branches against the sun, with fragrant grasses on the ground. Relatives are invited, but strangers are kept away for fear of the evil eye.

The wedding guests among peasants begin to arrive about noon, Sunday, and are received, at the hamlet of the groom, under the men's "dass". The women occupy a neighboring "dass", busily cooking the meat sauce "wot". The groom remains inside a hut and does not appear until shortly before he has to leave for the hamlet of the

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Footnote 82: Sunday is also wedding day of Christians of Lebanon. See - Feghali, Michel: La Famille Catholique au Liban. RETP, 6, pp. 291-308, Paris, 1925.

585 bride. Each guest brings a number of "enjära" breads, perhaps a dozen, and they leave cash contributions with the host, at least ETH$1-3. The afternoon is largely spent consuming barley-beer ("talla") of which the women have previously brewed huge jarsful. Particularly the "mizē" and the young men who will soon race across the countrysids to fetch the bride, drink their fill to "be strong" and light and gay on their feet later on. The groom has been fed on meat and butter, to be strong; while the bride fasts to be "weak". The more old-fashioned elders, especially those not kinsmen, sit in a corner, and eat and drink there, draped off by spread-out tofas.

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864 Sex information for the groom is one of the duties of the "mizē", who are usually older than he and married, but not of his parental generation, (particularly the older chief mize of the two, the "ser mizē", though sometimes the second "mize", called "gelgel mizē"). If necessary, they are even expected to assist in the deflowering of a recalcitrant bride who suffers last-minute fright, by holding her down so that the groom can consummate the marriage that night. The bride is given no such outright information, and can only guess what will happen to her from whisperings of other girls and from what she has observed in the hut at night of intimacies of the parents on the raised "alga" bed. She may well be confused and frightened, but this is regarded as praiseworthy, as virtuous. Her nails are trimmed down to the skin just before the wedding, so that she cannot scratch, then placed in hot butter to heal and be smooth.

585 About three hours before nightfall, about 4PM (unless the bride's hamlet is too far away, in which case earlier), the groom appears before the "dass" of his patrilineal kin, dressed in a new, well-

585 made, blue-bordered "kuta" (double toga). His hair has been
trimmed short, so that he will not appear like a rustic woodsman.
His mize flank him, and henceforth never part from his side during
the wedding proceedings. All three approach the groom's father,
bow from the hip in greeting. A patrilineal elder addresses the
groom in serious tones, reminding him that his obligations to his
father continue although he will now be founding a house of his
own. Then the father addresses his blessing to him, more briefly.
In reply, the son makes the motion of kissing the father's feet,
which the latter deftly prevents by tucking him under the chin so
that the kiss lands on the knee. He also kisses the knee of the
[826] elder (the knee is regarded as the seat of strength). Then the
groom and mize sit down about a minute, to symbolize having taken
part in the initial festivities.

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585 Meanwhile the escort saddle the biggest mule, preferable a strong, huge, "Senaar" mule. The groom bids farewell to the father and elder kinsmen, most of whom remain behind, though at least one elder kinsman rides along to act as spokesman, usually the "näggär abbat" who can best recapitulate the negotiations. The young "gobäz" escort run along on foot, brandishing their long sticks (formerly spears), shouting war shouts. A Senaar mule can go at a fast trot, so that the men on foot must keep on a run. The elder kinsman rides a smaller, Ethiopian mule.

585 Like a fast-moving army on the attack, the group crosses fields, trails, hills, valleys, finally stops in the valley below the hill on which the bride's hamlet is located. Here they catch their breath, shake off the dust, arrange their togas in "outgoing" fashion, go behind a bush to satisfy the call of nature after so much beer-

drinking. The "näggär abbat" now ascends the hill alone, to announce the peaceful intent of the arrived party. The bride's kin take formal cognizance of the arrival, but act as they did not know what the matter is all about. This initiates the formal recapitulation of the main points of the negotiation.

Permission is given for the party to climb up, and they stop before the "dass" shelter of the bride's family where a similar gathering of elders, kinfolk, males, females, are seated and drinking beer, in their separate groups. The groom is hidden by the mise who step in front of him within the groom's crowd standing in front of the shelter. The bride is still hidden in her parental tent.

In the presence of the c̣heqa shum, sometimes also the confessor-priest, the seated elder of the bride's asks: "Why have you come, my friends?". The groom's elder kinsman replies: "To ask for your girl so-and-so, to marry a son of our clan".

Question: "Who will the groom be?"

Reply: "So-and-so, son of so-and-so".

Question: "What have you in your hands?"

The reply enumerates the conomic agreements of the previous negotiation, and often a dabtara writes it all down. Finally, the bride's elder pronounces "Eshshi" (O.K.), and invites the groom's party in, without however seating them or offering drink. For first the young couple has to ratify the agreement. The groom is now revealed and takes the solemn oath, "May the Emperor die", such-and-such a girl is henceforth my wife". This is the "Semanya" oath. The groom's elder kinsman affirms: "Hayle Selassie yemut". The bride's kinsmen affirm: "Hayle Selassye yemut".

By this time night has fallen, little lamps are lit, and the

585 heavily veiled bride, unable to see through the heavy toga over her head and figure, is led to the center of the "dass" before the elders, to shouts of "ellel" by the women. For in rural areas it is still considered shameful to take the bride away in daylight. Her kinfolk say to her: "Say that so-and-so is your husband". She is expected to whisper it shyly, so that her words are repeated by witnesses that she, too, has taken the "Semanya" oath. This is greeted by "ellel" joyshout of the women.

Next, the "mizē" are sworn in. The bride's father or elder say to the bridegroom: "Call for us two guarantors for her eyes, head and teeth". Whereupon the "mizē" step forward and take the oath.

Now the groom's party is invited to sit down, room is made for them, and beer and meat stew are passed to them.

The formal boasting, the "fukkara" dance and chant, is begun by the bride's kinsmen, then quickly taken up by the groom's kinsmen. Each side recites feats of bravery, renown, warriors, holy priests, "great men" in the ancestry and kin of the side to which it belongs. Spears or firearms are brandished, held behind the neck, while epic battles are recited in poetic form and exaggeration. Each tries to surpass the other in this friendly contest, (footnote 83), but mock each other's deficiencies in composition of verses or recitation.

The groom affirms by oath that he will "do good and not evil" to his bride, that they will live together: "I, by my shield, she

[17] Footnote 83: Similar boasting contests are common in the Middle East.

585 by her spindle" ("bägashay bäenzert"), with their pooled property and strength. In front of the confessor-priest, the groom extinguishes a light, saying: "May God extinguish me like this flame, if I break my oath to her". He gives the mize, if he can afford it, a neck-cord with a silver cross or ring on it, which the latter places around the bride's neck, For the groom does not touch the bride at her parental shelter.

Permission is finally given by the bride's elders to leave, and her spokesman proclaims: "Our daughter we herewith give to your son. Haile Selassye yemut".

The Senaar mule is quickly saddled, and after the groom has mounted, the heavily veiled bride is lifted behind him by the mize, so that she clasps the groom's waist. She is wearing jodphurs as noblewomen do when riding. Waving sticks and shouting war cries, the escort runs before and on both sides of the couple, lighting the way with resinous torches.

Arrived at the "dass" of the groom, the bride sits with him in a corner, flanked by the everpresent "mizē", while loud boasting, "hotu" jumping, "fukkara" boasting, beer-drinking and feasting continue until about 3A.M. About an hour before that, the section in which the bride and groom are sitting is curtained off by means of togas, so that they can sleep together in privacy. Gradually the other celebrants drop off to sleep, heavy with beer, around the fire, all over the "dass", like a guard of honor for the bridal
585 couple. Some of the young men, "gobaz" amuse themselves with
831 teasing games, such as "mock-court" in which the loser is fined beer or honey or a goat (footnote 84); or with sexual buffoonery

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Footnote 84: In Harar, southwest Ethiopia, a mock-lawsuit is held in which the loser must provide the drinks for a week after the wedding. See- Leslau: A Wedding Lawsuit in Harar. (Bib)

585 [831] such as imitating the coitus of a donkey by holding a stick between the legs like a donkey's penis, and two other sticks held vertically to symbolize the vulva, teasing the bridegroom with enacted awkwardness until the actors find the "entrance". But finally the young men follow their elders in deep sleep.

The bride is expected to be, in fact contracted for, a virgin, "dengel". If she is not, there are several possibilities. The groom may lover her so much, or may be so ashamed, that he will keep silent. If he complains, the marriage can be forthwith annulled, in front of witnesses. In this case the shame is great for the bride, and she might be severely beaten. The "signs of virginity" are called "kebber" (lit. honor). The groom or the mize have the right to examine the clothing for blood, and the mize sometimes wave the trophy with glad shouting "The fortress is broken", even take the trophy with them 3 days later on their visit to the bride's family to bring the glad tidings, which honor the bride's kin, and collect their reward.

Since the bride is usually very young at her first marriage, she often suffers considerable pain. Usually she sits up quietly the next morning, in the corner of the "dass", with a serious face, while husband appears gay as the "victor". She is usually ashamed to cry out at night, among these strangers. When the sun rises, the groom and his friends walk some distance away to fulfill calls of nature, and discuss the "victory". When they return, the bride goes with some of the girls, but quietly and without boasting.

The following two or three nights, the bride and groom will have more privacy in a newly-built hut of their own, the "chagola" of "mushorra" (honeymoon hut), because, as the saying goes, "the

585 bride will cry out for many nights because of the pain". But is is also believed that this painful initiation into marriage bodes well for marital happiness, for, if later the husband neglects or mistreats her, she will remind him of his victory: "Remember you were my first, you were the one who hurt [illegible]".

184
585 In towns, several different customs prevail, and modern change, partly in imitation of nobility, partly in imitation of the Italians during their brief occupation, has seeped in, through eager, though partial, imitation.

In town the wedding ("serg") is more elaborate. Instead of the "dass" shelter, a large canvas tent is borrowed. Men and women still occupy separate tents. But the wedding takes place in daylight, in mid-afternoon, after which the unveiled bride, seated next to the groom, is driven in a rented automobile through the town, followed by other celebrants in varying conveyances or on foot. Before that, there is less boasting by kinsmen warriors and more by hired "*azmari*" minstrels, male or female, who entertain the wedding guests. If male they often accompany their impromptu verses with the single-string "masenqo" violin; if female, with the native banjo, the "qrar". They permit themselves such liberties as nudging the guests, singing flirtatiously, even aggressively at them, singing praises to rich individuals, the bride and groom, and kinsmen, to extort cash gifts from them.

There are tables and benches inside the tent at which guests are seated by the clever ushers, the hired"*aggafari*" (lit. chamberlain), according to social status and official position in town. The ones of high status, including Europeans, are seated at the host's table (usually the groom's), and are served honey-mead ("tej")

184 instead of barley-beer, and the best of available meat dishes.
585 In return, the wealthier guests are expected to leave larger cash gifts as they leave. It is in this tent that the "semanya" marriage is performed, and the bridal couple blessed by the "mänfäs gubaē" priest, who will later watch over their marriage. His blessing is the same as that in the rural hamlet:

[539]

> "May God make you capable of begetting, of conception, for office-holding, for honor,
> for the communion and the flesh of the Lord.
> May God guide you to truth and make you kin with
> Abraham and Sarah".

Though the bride in town may be called out from the women's tent, and thus be the only female eating with the men, seated next to the groom, they still act shy with each other in public. Men like to believe that, though there are no tears in public, brides weep silently, out of fear; - the "vanquished sex". But the groom does not yet patronize her in public with the "gursha", hand to mouth feeding, as he will starting some weeks after.

c) Post-Wedding Adjustments and Kin Relations.

585 After the traditional rural wedding, the "dase" remains standing for a week, in both the groom's and the bride's hamlets, to shelter visitors. After two full days of marriage have passed, the mize go to the bride's hamlet to report on her well-being, adjustment and good treatment. They are feted and sleep in the "dase". The next day they return, carrying an invitation to the bridal couple and a specified number of companions (which is usually exceeded!) to come to the bride's hamlet for a 3-day visit, the "mäls".

585 [574] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shuro"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is favorable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride my not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjăra" daily for her husband, cooking "woṭ", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "ṭyēff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539]
"Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
(but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
(meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will"divorce her soon".

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596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byĕt" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

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422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731]
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361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byĕt" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäña" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

423 hind on the ancestral lands.

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361
This succession of events has taken place so often in Amhara history, that very few old settlements have remained on the same
[591] spot for even a century. As a result, many regional varieties of "patrilocal residence" have develpped, and even "matrilocal residence" is not excluded, though most bridegrooms would shun such a fate. Also, the land tenure of the Amhara has become complex and replete with litigation, because of the amorphous definition of "byet", which sometimes emphasizes the consanguineal aspect, sometimes the residential, of kinship after marriage.

B. Problems of the Married Couple and Divorce.

586 When a couple has remained married for a number of years, people say they are "_rägga_" (lit. coagulated), stuck on each other. For divorce of a first marriage is common as the partners mature.

If her husband neglects her, wanders off, is a drunkard, or beats her too often, a woman may decide to initiate divorce proceedings. A man may do so if she is disobedient, e.g. wanders off to town without his permission.

587 If a man takes a "damoz" wife in addition to his "semanya" wife, the latter has no recourse in court. But if he takes anouther "semanya" wife, she can have him arrested, if she can locate him, for breaking his oath. She then angrily accuses him of doing a stupid thing, "you married one ox hump (shanna) above the other". He may be fined, but his first marriage may still remain valid. If a "semanya" wife hears that her husband has a previous wife, she often laughs, flattered, mocking the other woman by saying: "I married on top of her and not below" - for evidently, the man,

587 knowing both, has preferred her!

[588] A deserted wife, angry that her husband has found another, will often take a lover to buy her "a sheep for Epiphany", butter for her hair, and cotton for her distaff.

578 587 The following relationships are called "gobban", rivals, to each other:

"Semanya" versus "damoz" wife;

Man A, whose divorced wife lives with man B. The men are "gobban".

Woman X, whose divorced husband lives with, or married, woman Y.

"Semanya" and "damoz" wives, versus new concubine, "gärä̈d", fearing permanency.

One "gärä̈d" against another, (also called "wushemma").

But only "semanya" wives are regarded as legal rivals.

842 586 When a woman is barren, she may follow the biblical example and ask her husband to take a servant girl, "gärä̈d" to have children with her. A "semanya" wife may be divorced on grounds of barrenness, but "with honor", taking half of their communal property with her. Amhara peasants believe that women become barren in the towns because of "loose living". [588] A woman divorced on grounds of barrenness will often have sexual intercourse with many men, hoping that she will conceive and thus have the blame of barrenness taken from her.

848 A bastard, "diqala" has full inheritance rights if his father acknowledges him. Bastards are believed to be of violent tempers, like "Muhammad Gran" (the Galla Muslim chief who devastated much of Ethiopia in the 16th century, reputedly a bastard).

586 When suing for divorce, either partner appeals to the "mänfäs gubāe" (colloquially "mänfäs abbat"), the "soul-counselor" priest, who has jurisdiction even over "semanya" marriages. Only he can

586 issue the traditional divorce, "*mäftat*" (lit. freeing, i.e. to marry another) dissolving "semanya" marriages. But before doing so he tries to reconcile the couple, quoting proverbs, calling on kin elders, postponing the case time and again to let them "cool off". One mate can summon the other before him by appealing to the "manfas gubae" to issue a summons, and if the mate refuses to come, police can be sent to bring him by force.

A desperate wife can bring pressure on the "mänfäs gubǟ" by appealing to him as a priest, tearing off her "matab" neckcord signifying Coptic faith, and threatening to turn Muslim. This is interpreted to signify that she is "nearly out of her mind with suffering".

If the divorce is granted, each mate must pay a fine of ETH$5.-, for technically they have "torn the marriage oath". The divorce is witnessed by the mizō, the kin of each mate, and the cheqa shum. Half the husband's property goes to her, particularly of their communal property and its increase, except items called "*gil*" which they had agreed in writing not to divide and retain as individual property. Unweaned babies remain with the mother, also, usually, children below the "age of reason" (ages 7 to 10). The husband will often take older children, especially sons. If he permanently has injured his wife's eye, or hand, he must pay her damages, even if there is no divorce. The formula of divorce, pronounced by each mate, is "May the Emperor die, I have divorced you".

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548 In rural areas and in the past, a woman almost always returned to her kinfolk. But since the growth of towns, many divorced women have been drawn to the easier livelihood of the "street of single girls" in towns, where they live in shacks, and serve as short-term

586 548 "damoz" wives and innkeepers, offering bed, board and home comforts to traders and transients. By treating some customers well, they hope to find another husband. When no clients are available, they still earn some income by brewing beer and selling it. They wash themselves and their clothing far more often than peasant women, and pay servants to do the heavy labor and cleaning for them. They leave their children with their kinfolk, sometimes sending money. If she were to remain with her kinfolk herself, family pressure would be great for her to remarry quickly, very likely a more undesirable husband than the first.

587 If and when she does remarry, she usually has few of the social safeguards of her first, virgin marriage. There are no "mizē to protect her, the "mänfäs gubaē" will not be as sympathetic in marital disputes, and the new husband may take her far away from her kinfolk. But by this time she has matured, at least in experience, and is far more capable of protecting her own interests, economically as well as emotionally, than in her first marriage.

5. The Age of Dominance: The Elder:

888 The term "shemagelyē" signifies an elder; serious, wise, past the prime of physical strength but more energetic and persistent in determining and commanding human relations, particularly within the residential kin group, than ever before. He is treated with great respect.

887 He is one of the dominant elders who rule the kin group, parcel out land for usufruct to biological family units, make decisions in marriage negotiations and other personal affairs involving the family. In town, they act as judges on higher levels. Among the

887 nobility they have moved as high in position as their inherited potential allows.

886 In appearance he usually grows a chin beard, which comes late, usually not before the age of thirty, and is greying when a man becomes a "shemagalyē" at about 40. At that time he is usually a grandfather.

As ruler at the apex of his own social pyramid, he is limited only by direct physical strength, in which no one expects him to excel. But if a former warrior, he may be vain and not admit his fading physical strength, and try to show that he can still hold up against young men in warlike games. This is the only time when an elder is occasionally mocked, as "wäbärra" (lit. he struts).

888 Dependency in old age is no problem among rural kin groups living on settled land, whether their own or rented. Even in senility, the elder is respected and cared for; even when, as he himself admits, he is "good only for guarding chickens" ("ṭerṭes alä" - became senile).

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792 However, dependency of an old woman is a more difficult problem, though she, too, is generally cared for. But since she has no functions of leadership, her status lacks the positive, if she becomes a widow, and is too weak to perform the household labors [145] of women. Also, woman fade physically more rapidly than men. As a result, the "mäbälät" or "baltēt", a greying woman past menopause, or widow of serious mind and spirit, often takes vows as a nun, wears the "qob" of a nun though continuing in her old residence, and spends much time in the churchyard, working in the "betelehem" hut where beer and bread for church use are prepared. Nuns are always old women, partly because it is not considered proper for a

888 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no
792 career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks.
Though there are usually fewer widows then widowers (due to the
mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is
not a happy one. The proverb says:

> [539] "Now that my fortune (husband) has died,
> what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind
735 or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have
[792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as
a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than
an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be reduced
to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches,
repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Medhane Aläm,
selä Maryam, selä Giyorgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of
St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send
out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or
is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves
to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy").
608] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to
establish human relationships.

6. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will: "What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patrilineal descent), personal belongings such as oxhide mats, shamma

763 (togas), horncups, etc, usually are given to the confessor, also some cash. In return, the confessor gives last rites, absolving the dying from sin, and, after death, assigns a burial place in the churchyard if the deceased was a member of the parish. 764 A circumference of rocks is set around the grave, but no permanent gravestones, so that after a few years the growth of bush and the rains have obscured the spot. Exceptions are only in case of noblemen, "telleqsäw", (great men) where markings are remembered long enough to permit digging up the bones if they wanted them sent to some holy monastery, such as Dabra Libanos. Non-members of the parish, especially if poor, are buried in the bush some distance from the residential area.

[763] The confessor stays with the dying, praying until the last moment. When death sets in, the eyes and lips are closed, the corpse is washed, the big toes and thumbs are tied, the arms folded in a cross, so that the hands cover the sexual parts. The body is wrapped in a *shamma*, and tied in a mat of palm branches or broad reeds, (called "*sälyēn*"); tied on top of the head, across area of the eyes, neck, biceps, forearm, waist, thigh, below knee, and over the heel. The corpse is placed on the bed ("alga", carried to church, entering at the north gate as "salute" to the church, the mass is chanted, incense is burned in raising clouds, then the corpse is buried in a comparatively shallow grave which is covered with earth and then rocks. It is usually not marked with a name.

765 The moment death has set in, women run screaming out of the hut to announce their grief, wailing loudly and incessantly. In some areas they still scratch and cut themselves till blood flows, though the emperor's urging of restraint is reducing this. The

765 hands are thrown into the air in a gesture of loss and abandonment in grief, and the mourners leap into the air, dancing about in semi-formal style, as if suffering such intense inner pain that they cannot stand in one place. Some roll on the ground, some hit themselves with rocks.

Men wail and dance in somewhat more restrained fashion, which soon turns into a more formal eulogy. Whenever another kinsman or neighbor arrives on the scene, both men and women fall on each other's necks (mostly of the same sex), in a gesture of mutual condolence. Both men and women break into semi-chanted eulogies, praising the goodness of the departed, recalling past bereavements, even the deaths of saints and great warriors not related to them.

This more formal funeral chant, impromptu though it is, is called "ergedo". It consists of plaintive chants in the mode called "märäged zēma", is accompanied by slow rythmic dance movements in which the knees are raised high, by refrains, rythmic handclapping, and, in case of a "great man", even by drums. The funeral chant is repeated when the corpse is carried in farewell procession around the church, and for many days thereafter as kinsmen arrive from afar for condolence.

Professional weepers, "alqash", who are always female, are employed only by families of "telleq säw" (great men). They are adept at impromptu composition of poetry, as well as equipped with powerful and trained lungs.

Endowments and bequests to the church, by noblemen, are handled by the "qēs gebäz" of the nearest church, but if no large, well-organized church is near, the governor of the province may appoint a local "cheqa shum", or a higher state officer, to handle the bequest.

000 bequest.

765 Mourning is well organized and elaborate. Women shave their heads in many regions. Their shammas are dyed black, or at least dirtied, or, in towns, worn upside down with black borders. Even women calling on a mourner disarray their togas in sympathy before entering. Since it is considered shameful to mourn alone, kinfolk come from afar, and they as well as neighbors, bring enjara, barley beer, meat stew, coffee, even cash to contribute to the fee of the priests and expenses of "tä̲z̲k̲a̲r̲" (memorial services and feasts). Thus the mourning turns into a feast, which in turn attracts large numbers of people, including non-relatives, free-loaders and multitudes of beggars.

The biggest formal "tä̲z̲k̲a̲r̲" is held on the 40th day after death, when the soul is believed to have its earliest opportunity to be freed from purgatory. Masses are chanted in the church, and priests and chanters are rewarded with money, barley-beer, and a place of honor at the big feast. The rectangular shelter, "dass" (used in weddings), is erected once again, of young treetrunks, covered with the branches, and odoriferous grasses are spread on the ground. Women sit in their own groups; and the odors of their spiced pepper stewpots, and the large quantities of barley beer consumed, soon give both men and women, kinfolk and visitors, an atmosphere of a feast rather than that of mourning.

At the "tazkar" for a deceased noblewoman held on the meadows of the monastery of Dabra Libanos, more than 5,000 peasants were feasted. Even peasants in modest circumstances fete more than 100 persons, slaughter about 5 sheep and two old oxen, contribute dozens of huge jarsful of barley-beer, hundreds of enjara breads. As a

765 result, the "tazkar" is the greatest single economic consumption in the life cycle, and not infrequently brings economic ruin, so that measures to restrain it have often been urged. But since everyone wants to imitate the "great man" (noble) and no one wants to appear to mourn too lightly, tazkars continue elaborate. They are also major social events.

Lesser tazkar memorial services and feasts are observed, especially by the noblemen and well-to-do, on the 7th day after death, and on the 12th and 30th days, 6 months, one year, and 7 years after the passing. Upon leaving, the condolents say to the mourners: "May God give rest to his soul".

Even in more modern Addis Ababa, little has changed in the tazkar pattern, except that the aforementioned physical violence is now reduced.

PART V : INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

156 Social stratification and kinship relations dominate interpersonal relations in Amhara society, and, though they put their stamp also on segments of the Amhara cultural pattern, they do not limit the corresponding artistic expression as much as one might expect. Thus, while Amhara artistic expression shares much of the "formality" of the rest of the culture, it evidences considerable potentialities for individual initiative, particularly in non-material expression such as games of intellect.

538 Material culture has not been much developed among the Amhara;
artistic expression also has many of the usual characteristics of a
[212] non-literate society, since literacy has traditionally been limited to
a small minority of the population. This has led both to a reinforcement of formality in literature, and to a playfulness in oral artistic expression which remained unfettered.

1. Communication and Interpersonal Relations.

203 Communication "by grapevine" is still the major method of dissemination of news, rumor, and entertainment. Feudal lords in the past would even make use of "musical signatures" which identified the sender: to prove that a message was actually sent by the sender, the messenger was taught a secret musical note like a code, which identified the
212 master. There was considerable suspicion about interference with
203 messages by enemies, who might alter them, so that, when messages were
written, the scribe was careful not to leave a margin at the bottom, lest an enemy intercepting the message might add harmful statements falsely reflecting on the sender (e.g. his loyalty). Since most writing was done by formal, professional scribes, and Geez square writing was used, handwriting was not considered sufficient safeguard for identification. This pattern of leaving no margin persists to this day.

203 Transportation of messages, until the recent installment of telegraph, was by messenger, and still is to a considerable extent. In the past, the king or governor would send an official messenger, ("melekt šaṭṭa") with the message wedged tightly in a cleft stick carried above the head while running, which assured safety to the runner.

Proclamation of decrees was and sometimes still is drummed out at the public market place, and only in the capital are public radio loudspeakers utilized. These decrees are heard in respectful silence, though unpopular decrees might, among Amhara, be followed by a delayed "murmuring", which, in the past, often led to local rebellions. Spies [208] of the government listen on such occasions to learn public opinion (astäyayät") in time.

211 Landmarks "for memory" are encountered frequently, and they partly take the place of inscribed monuments of cultures of greater literacy. Commemorative monuments in the countryside, called "mäsaläniya", take the form of conical piles of rocks, to which passersby add small rocks, so that one grows sometimes until no one remembers what the original event was. It may have been a battle, or the resting place of a saint. There are no name inscriptions, this being sometimes purposely avoided to prevent an evil spirit such as buda from fastening onto the name and doing harm.

212 To insure precision of communication in matters of culture focus, e.g. in religious communication, a combination of pictures and written words is used. This has developed the ancient comic-strip-type of illustration of religious scenes, mainly biblical, hagiological, and Abyssinian-National, found in canvas paintings on the walls of churches. The words spoken by the character are written into the empty space near the mouth. The scenery is starkly realistic. The style shows fierce concentration on the event depicted, without irrelevent background scenery; naivete, but body positions shown with realistic gusto.

212 195 Communication among the Amhara can be said to be formal on all matters of culture focus. Writing is regarded by the Amhara as relegated to formal use, and schoolboys were penalized for experimenting with it informally. Language, however, being oral and thus less controllable, compensates for this; and artistic expression and experimentation make free and often playful and inventive use of the lexical, grammatical, and syntactical raw material of language.

A. The Raw Material of the Amharic Language Put to Use.

a) Historical Development

197 Much of the lexical matter and most of the grammar of the Amharic language, also the basis of the alphabet that it uses, are derived from Geez, one of the South Arabian languages of about 500 B.C. The term "lïsanä Geez" the language of the Geez, has, among Abyssinians, the connotation of "language of the free men", i.e. conquerors. Linguistic scholars have raised the question whether one single language, Geez, was imported from Southern Arabia about that time, or whether different, possibly related, languages came from there via separate channels at different times. The latter theory seems more likely, and Amharic may owe the Semitic part of its character to a sister language of Geez, rather than to Geez itself (footnote 85). But the Amhara firmly believe in the derivation from Geez itself - and directly.

197 192 Whether directly or indirectly derived originally, certain it is that for many centuries and quite consciously even today, the Amhara have been borrowing freely and proudly from the Geez language any term useful particularly to express abstract concepts, in which Amharic is

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Footnote 85 - Theory of Professor Marcel Cohen, quoted by Leslau Archaic Features in South Ethiopia. (See Bibliography).

197 192 sometimes poor, but Gees very rich. In fact, linguistic purists among modern-nationalistic educated Amharas, urge rejection of foreign loan-words in favor of continued and even revived borrowing from Gees cognates.

212 The Amharic script, largely derived from ancient Sabean characters, is, unlike other Semitic scripts, written from left to right. The characters are syllabic, based on 26 consonants from Gees, plus 4 labiovelar diphthongs, plus 7 additional consonants added in Amharic and called "y̆äärab fidäl" (lit. the Arabic alphabet). These 37 consonants in Amharic are always written in syllabic form, combined with one of 7 vowal orders, so that students must learn a syllabic alphabet of 259 characters. There are also 20 symbols for numerals, which are still taught, and even printed in the modern press, and not replaced by the simpler Arabic numerals; though the latter have been recently taught. These characters and numerals are now printed on a sheet that also includes the Gospel of St. John, in Geez, and a photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie; pasted on a cardboard, this sheet is now carried to school by the young students.

197 192 Amharic also derives a considerable part of its raw material from Cushitic languages spoken in Ethiopia prior to (and after) the Semitic colonization, perhaps more so than any other Abyssinian language (footnote 86). From these Cushitic sources Amharic obtains part of its vocabulary (especially most of its terms relating to concrete matters),

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Footnote 86 - Leslau: Southeast Semitic
Leslau: Observations on Gurage Documents
Leslau: Review of Cohen's Nouvelles Etudes d'Ethiopien Meridional
Cohen, M.: Traite de la Langue Amharique
Houghton: Aspects of Amharas

197 most of its syntax, morphology (such as the "frequentative"), phonology
192 such as considerable onomatopoetry and monosyllabic words (though some of these may have been carried in Geez also). The result of this linguistic blend is a number of expressive choices somewhat analogous to the choice in English between Anglo-Saxon cognates and Latin-French cognates: e.g. the word "sun" can be expressed as "sahay" (from Geez) or "jembar" (from Cushitic). Amhara people use these alternates in many ways: to emphasize distinction between "sacred" and "profane", between the philosophic and the prosaic.

578 For, to the mind of the Amhara, Geez and its derivatives are
197 spiritually connected with the church liturgy, with philosophy. Even
186 in the present situation of change, feudal conservatives and the church have banded together most strongly against the suggested simplification of the Amharic alphabet (which is recommended for quicker learning, expecially by illiterate adults of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia; and for devising typewriters). This traditional, religious conservatism is now being reinforced by the new and incipient group of nationalistic, linguistic purists, who bemoan the introduction of more and more European cognates. But the latter group is still small and does not have nearly the political power of the old-style religious conservatives.

197 Finally, the often-repeated qualification with regard to the effect of regional differences applies to linguistic matters also. In different regions, derivations from different Cushitic languages affect all phases of the language, particularly the lexical.

192 b) Lexical, Grammatical and Syntactical Phases.

The Amharic vocabulary is rich in onomatopoetic terms which have been formalized:

192 "kul kul" - to call the chickens. (Footnote 87)

"fwa fwa" - cascade, waterfall.

"ṭäb alä" - drop by drop ("alä", lit. he went, is the common auxiliary).

"ṭäf täf alä" - poured liquid from a narrow-necked bottle.

"ṭwa alā" - water falling on fire.

"c̣ha alä" - became silent, tranquil, calm; hence - deserted village (!)

"c̣hec̣hc̣h alä" - began to chant; hence - birds in the morning (Twitter).

"gwäwqa alä" - knocked loudly at door

"kof kof alä"- marched with gravity (sound of shoes).

"enc̣heq alä" - (sound of) picking feet from muddy place.

"agurāmarrämä" - murmured (sound of large drum), hence - rolling thunder, and incipient rebellion.

"anc̣habächc̣häbä" - clapped hands rythmically, to keep time for music, or to greet a "great man" (Africa style).

"andagaddaga" - made gluglu (water through pipe).

193 Grammar, called "soasso" or "säwasew", is mastered only by the 195 traditional-educated church scholars ("mämhēr") and a few members of 554 noble families. Perhaps only a few hundred individuals master all its intricacies. Emperor Haile Selassie's speeches strike the average

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[192] Footnote 87 - Other calls to animals include:
"Kulel Kulel" - to call lost donkey at night.
"Kes Kes" - (or "cheg") to drive sheep on
"Kis Kis" - to drive calves on.
"Buch Buch" - call to dogs.
"Hush" - to drive loaded donkeys from path, so the master can ride through
"Ohē" or "Mäch" - to get a horse or mule started when riding it.

193 195 554 Amhara layman as esoteric and hard to understand - which causes them to be respected all the more. "Soasso" literally means "ladder" in the Geez language, and the study of grammar is regarded as "uplifting", steps on the ladder of knowledge, achievable fully only by the few, but respected almost as an end in itself.

193 Special features of this grammar are the following: There is no present tense, and the future tense is used also to indicate the present, as in other Semitic languages. A completed action, in the sense of a "present that has become a past" is expressed by a gerund compound tense. Frequentatives, i.e. reduplicated syllables, are much used to indicate reiterative, intensive, augmentative and attenuative action; foreign scholars believe them to be of Cushitic origin (Footnote 87). Possessive pronouns often take the form of infixes. Among noteworthy absences in this grammar are: No male or female genders, though sex distinctions are made even in concepts of inanimate objects.

There are no "cases" in the Latin sense. There are no subjunctives. The passive and reciprocal voices take the same form, though the meanings are distinguished. A complexity that never fails to complicate matters for non-Amharic speakers (other Ethiopians as well as foreigners) is the gemination, the duplication of a number of consonants, "lala", which gives the word another meaning entirely because it changes the basic stem. The basic stem of verbs is most often a Semitic "triliteral", but through loss or gain is often changed to a "biliteral" or "quadriliteral".

The syntax of Amharic is regarded by foreign scholars as basically Cushitic, much like the vocabulary, and unlike its grammar (Footnote 88).

Footnote 87 - Leslau: Le Thème Verbal Frequentative dans les Langues Etiopiens.
Revue des Etudes Semitiques, I, PP. 15-31. Paris, 1939.

Footnote 88 - Leslau: The Influence of Cushitic on the Semitic Languages of Ethiopia. (in) Word, 1945, pp. 54-82.

193 (E.g. instead of "the man who came", Amharic constructs the sentence "who came the man".)

212 Orthography shows considerable ambivalence of choice, perhaps due to the later influences of Arabic and to the Amharic additions to the Geez alphabet. Thus, interchanges of "q" and "g", "t" and "t", "m" and "n" are common among consonants; "ä" and "i"; "e" and "e" and "a" somewhat less commonly exchanged among vowels. This confuses the root, vowel and tense indications for the foreigner, and even Amharic-speakers when discussing a matter not commonly discussed, may misunderstand each other because of these interchanges, especially if they come from different regions.

c) Regional Variations.

197 Part of the wide variety of regional linguistic differences among Amharic-speakers is due to the long, conservative, provincial semi-isolation. Some of this is not much different from provincialisms in rural Europe; so that the pronounciation of even common words such as "aydollän" (he isn't here) identifies the Amhara from Shoa, "aydällän" from Begemdir province (Gondar). But a much greater part of the regional differences is due to the fact that for many centuries, perhaps millenia, the Amharic speakers of Begemdir (Gondar) and Gojjam provinces have been exposed to "old-Cushitic" languages such as Agau, while the Amhara of Shoa province has been exposed to "new-Cushitic" languages such as Galla.

The Abyssinian of Tigre province, whose "Tigre" or "Tigrinya" language may be a closer derivative of Geez than Amharic, has long maintained Semitic ties through continued influence of developing Arabic from Yemen and the Red Sea, and has in turn affected the inland Amharic of Semyen-Begemdir, whose people shared Abyssinian religion and culture. Western Amharas, e.g. in Gojjam province, but also in the trading center of Gondar, have been affected by vulgate Arabic spoken

197 in the neighboring Sudan, for Muslim traders even today mix more Arabic loanwords into their Amharic than do Amharas. Areas conquered by slightly islamized Galla and held from the 16th to the 19th centuries were affected to varying degrees by several Galla (Cushitic) dialects.

196 Semantic drift is now in the direction of the Amharic speech pattern of Shoa province, which replaces the dominance of former aristocratic Gondar, thus introducing many more Galla traits into the language. This change is concomitant with the increasing political [191] dominance and centralization of the Shoan dynasty and power. Proclamations emanate from Addis Ababa in Shoan Amharic, and schoolchildren are increasingly taught this "standard" Amharic. Old terms of other provinces are often falling into disuse.

Sometimes this process is conscious, particularly in matters of national pride. Thus, the old word "*tuqul*" for the primitive, round, thatched, wattle-and-mud hut, is now replaced, through influence directed from Addis Ababa, by "*sar byēt*" (lit. thatched house), considered more polite, for it denotes a house not yet covered by a corrugated iron roof, without the connotation of the mud walls; or, for similar reasons, by "*goja*" (lit. simple residence).

The use of the call "*Guragē*" for laborer has been expressly forbidden, because it is now considered insulting to that hardworking ethnic group, and the call "coolie" has been purposely imported. Furthermore, increased use is made in Shoan Amharic of Geez abstracts for modern purposes, such as the suffix "*nät*", which can be attached [178] to any Amharic verb to render it into an abstraction. Modernization, which has recently introduced such new cultural phenomena into Addis Ababa as the adult, unmarried "Miss", has, within the past decade, amended an old term to describe the new phenomenon; the old "*woyzäro*" (married, noble lady; Mrs.) is amended to the new concept "*woyzarit*" (adult though unmarried Miss). This term is still unknown in the rural

196 Amhara provinces, but is entering through the provincial capitals, such as Gondar, at the present time. Semantic drift can be traced along these lines.

d) Literature; Special Argots.

538 The religious character of most of the traditional Amharic-Geez literature has already been described in connection with the church.

Some of the material of liturgy finds its way into lay usage. Rhymes, "getem", originally composed for devotional poetry, have long found their way to chants of praise sung to warlords, feudal nobles, the king, and by extension, philosophic-sentimental poetry in general.

Folk literature, which is oral, contains numerous stories resembling Aesop's fables, in which witty repartee among or with animals is featured (Footnote 89).

538 Individual poets and other authors, if they existed in number,
522 have largely been forgotten, because of the cultural prohibition against writing down any but sacred matter, and the restricted literacy. But a fortunate exception exists in the person of an Amhara wit named Aläqa (lit. chief, an honorific title) Gäbre-Hanna, who was a contemporary of Emperor Menelik II in the late 19th century. (Footnote 90) He, too, apparently did not write down any of his many witticisms, but since he lived fairly recently, commuting between his home in Gondar and the then incipient city of Addis Ababa, he is still popularly as well as officially identified with his stories in both localities, and some of the anecdotes even tie his person to historical events.

Footnote 89 - Courlander & Leslau: The Fire on the Mountain, 1950

Footnote 90 - Messing, S. D.: Ethiopian Folktales ascribed to the 19th Century Wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna. (in) Journal of American Folklore, Jan - March 1957, pp. 69-72.

538 522 He was a master of "*sowasso*"; of the pun which utilizes gemination and other grammatical possibilities to make an ironic observation and befuddle the unwary, so that they become public laughing stocks. Sometimes the joke was on his own Rabelaisian appetites in food and sex. More often he spoofed the pompousness of feudal and even royal powers, their love for amassing rules and regulations for their courts; and the pretended puritan piety of the priests, behind which facade he recognized witty insight into the minds of men, whose salty comments
[539] and behavior in private life he liked to burlesque. For example:

> "One day the servant of a witty priest suffered from a chigger (sandflea) embedded in his foot. The priest pried it out with a pin and threw it into the fire. A friend, watching this, objected jokingly, saying: "Why did you do this? May it not multiply in the fire?" Replied the priest: "It may be warmed, but not 'done up' ("yäzäräw" - also means begotten through sexual intércourse)."

Amhara listeners find such "impolite" stories extremely amusing.

195 198 The Amhara people recognize the *esoteric* use that can be made of their language, and they utilize this. Hence the expression "he is talking Amarinya", meaning "he is speaking in esoteric ways", with double meanings, hidden meanings, to becloud his real purpose so that he cannot be accused of lying and can say later that he meant something else. For example, the verb "qanna" can have the following meanings:

was right, direct, correct
was honest, just
succeeded, prospered
became jealous, envious
became zealous, fanatic, intolerant.

198 Certain occupational specialties have traditionally made use of

198 this esoteric raw material to develop special argots. The most notable ones are those used by traders; in magic; and by minstrels.

A merchant's argot (Footnote 91) uses Arabic loanwords, and also transforms the meaning or form of Amharic words, especially those that can have many alternate meanings. Trade routes travelled by merchants also carry distant lexical matter from Galla and Gurage - speaking provinces. Merchants utilize this argot as secret business codes.

Among practitioners of magic, the most famous argot is the "*Zar*" language (described in the section on "healing the spirit"). Like the other argots, this "language" has a solidly Amharic base, but this fact is not recognized by the Amharas themselves and has been discovered only by foreign linguistic scholars (Footnote 92). The "zar doctors" are of course careful to keep this fact a secret, for they claim that this language is not only "revealed" to them by the spirits, but that the spirit "talks through them", so that they themselves are free of responsibility for what they are saying while in a state of possession. Actually, the "zar language" contains purely grammatical Amharic, coded Amharic, transformed lexical matter, and loanwords. Scribes, "*dăbtära*", who perform amulet magic, impress their clients with a seemingly unintelligible, esoteric Amharic called "*yädăbtära qwanqwa*", (the language of the scribe), which often makes use of *sowasso* (grammar).

The argot of the minstrel, of the "*azmari*", is a professional code used to communicate with other members of the troupe, e.g. to point out at which guest to direct songs of praise to obtain a reward, without letting the audience become aware of this collusion (footnote 93)

Footnote 91 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Merchant's Argot - Language, 1949 pp. 22-28, Vol. 25, No. 1.

Footnote 92 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, July 1949, pp. 204-212

000 letting the audience become aware of this collusion. (footnote 93).

B. Interpersonal Etiquette and Relationships.

571 576 602 Interpersonal etiquette among the Amhara governs particularly those relations that can be described as "secondary group", for relations within the "primary group" are governed largely by specific kinship or religious rules of behavior.

It is a rare case - and considered very sad - if a person has no kin, and must base most of his human relations on secondary- group affiliations. The latter relationship includes most prominently the "agär" (lit. country, i.e. home district). Sometimes this refers only to the immediate parish, sometimes to the "meketl woräda" sub-district; but if a person finds himself in another province he may include the entire district, "woräda"; though the concept of "agär" does not usually extend beyond this territory in any real meaning of secondary group. If a person has no kin to turn to for aid in legal trouble, or needs a "was" guarantor to secure a job, he may seek out a man from his "agär". For this reason there is motivation to observe rules of etiquette particularly with individuals in the "agar" secondary group, such as visiting or inviting them, bring them "enquṭaṭash" gifts and flowers (through children) at New Year and "Masqal" festivals, etc. Such gifts are not given to complete strangers from a more distant territory, who are called "bada" (slightly derogatory term, with connotation of "rustic").

576 572 Interpersonal etiquette within the secondary group may lead to closer personal relations between two individuals, taking certain

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Footnote 93 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot. Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1952, Vol. 72, No. 3 pp. 102-109

576 572 specific forms. This relationship is mostly that of the "balenjära" (lit. mutual breadgivers), who enjoy the privilege of visiting each other without formal prearrangement; who may call upon each other to stand personal bond ("wās"); who are likely to ask each other to act as negotiator for the marriage of a son or daughter before the affair becomes a formal kinship matter.

The very absence of a kinship tie makes it possible for "balenjara" to negotiate arbitration of blood-money to end or prevent a bloody feud between kin groups. The intenseness of the "balenjära" relationship may range from the trusted, though casual companion, "goränsa", usually an age-mate, with whom interpersonal relationships are frequent and regular, but not intense; to the more intense but less frequent and less regular relationships with the "wädaj", a warm friend, "tebeq wädaj", the intimate confidante, so that the two individuals become "mestiräña" (mutual bosom pals) to each other. "Balenjära" address each other with "antu" (the more polite form of "thou"; and other "thou", "antä", being used for children and inferiors mostly). When walking or standing and talking to each other, "balenjära" (and also other acquaintances, if on the same social level) interlace one or two of their fingers, loosely, but enough to remain in physical communication. Like kinsmen, "balenjära" men kiss each other on the neck when they meet after not having seen each other for some weeks. Women may also establish "balenjära" relations with other women, and go on picnics together after the harvest in the dry season, especially on church holidays, but Amhara men believe that women do not form long-lasting friendships as often as men do.

[203] Dissemination of news and rumors through the "grapevine" occurs frequently through the channel of the "balenjära", who utilize the occasion of a bit of news as justification to drop in on each other, and to share barley beer and "enjära" bread (hence the term).

576 [572] Apart from this interpersonal relationship of choice, in which two individuals establish psychological response to each other (and mutual aid) outside the kinship group, most other forms of interpersonal etiquette are patterned so formally that they can be readily learned (even by outsiders). The vagueness and ambivalence of shifting etiquette of the Western world of modern times has not yet affected Amhara culture. Even modern-educated Amhara continue to fall back to the established pattern of traditional etiquette as soon as they return to their own country.

576 a) Formal Expressions of Status of Class, Age, Sex.

In formal expression of status, be it of class, age or sex, Amhara etiquette differentiates most sharply the dominant role from the role of the subordinate.

The most dramatic expression of this is the "gursha". It is enacted by the status superior toward the status inferior, a symbolic giving of food, money, wages, or other gifts. Thus, the master who wishes to indicate fondness and favor to the servant, will stuff some morsels of food into his mouth, publicly, while at dinner. A father will do it to his children, or to his wife. A chief may do it to a visiting "great man" of inferior or equal status, but never to a superior. However, a wife who has been married for some time and feels secure enough in her status to demonstrate equality, may jokingly return the favor and feed "gursha" to her husband, but only after he has initiated the activity.

[465] Servants, when receiving wages, receive them with both hands raised above the head, with bowed head and downcast eyes, and must never look at the money, much less count it in presence of the employer; for etiquette requires that wages be regarded as "gursha". (In recent years, the term "gursha" has become used in the sense of "tip", gratuity, baksheesh.)

576 Politeness is not considered "common", but differentiates most sharply between the behavior and expected behavior of the noble "great man" (telleq säw) and the rustic (balagär). The "great man", noble is expected to show graciousness, noblesse oblige. When a social inferior tries to kiss his feet, it is gracious to chuck him under the chin so as not to let him reach the feet, so that the kiss lands on the [593] master's knee. Fathers or mothers imitate this same etiquette when their sons, arriving or departing, try to kiss their feet in symbolic etiquette of subordination. The motion is smooth and evidently routine and well-practiced.

195 Stylistic distinctions in the speech pattern also differ between expected etiquette of a noble and rustic. It is noble to talk slowly, softly, choosing words with unworried deliberation, which indicates to the listener that the noble, a man of few and calm words, is secure in his rank and position, and does not have to worry about possible results of poor communication. A noble uses soft-and-polite language (a unified concept to the Amhara), called "yäcätalanät negeger", showing good judgement and taste ("yelũneta"). But his softness of speech has a firm and impressive quality, referred to as "läza mälkām" (lit. good tongue).

576 It is the mark of a social parvenue of "low" ancestry, if he struts ("tälattätä") with an upward-turned face, and is too proud to reply politely when addressed politely. A true noble, though he will not dismount from his mule when greeted by a commoner on foot (as he would to a social equal or superior), will raise his hat a bit, or raise his toga a bit, in reply to a greeting, in which the commoner has removed from his head his toga protection from the sun.

A social inferior may not sit down in the company of seated "great men" until invited to do so twice. He is expected to be ready to join

576 the retinue of the great man, to serve as messenger, whenever the "great man" decides to go anywhere. When the great man graciously extends his hand in greeting, the social subordinate takes it lightly into his two cupped hands as if it were a precious gift, a "gursha", and permits the hand to be withdrawn soon; for the extended handholding is limited to social equals. The great man is addressed as "getoch" (lit. "masters", using the plural). When appearing before a great man, the toga ("shamma") is redraped in the fashion of appearing before the feudal lord or king, leaving the upper part of the body bare (or nowadays, covered by another garment) in a gesture of self-abasement. Bowing is from the hip, both in case of individuals and by the population at large when the "great man" passes in public.

However, self-abasement among the Amhara is not supposed to be carried to extremes, in their opinion. It does happen that an old rustic ("balagär") will show great servility (resembling that of Uncle Tomism of American Southern states). But this is quietly mocked by other onlooking Amhara commoners. Such a "balagär" may, e.g. throw his toga off his own shoulders and spread it on the ground for a bishop or other great man to walk on, later treasuring the footprints. But it is considered etiquette, especially by young church students and other youngsters, to carry the sandals of adults or priests when they are taken off before entering church.

576 195 It is the mark of the rustic (illiterate) if he is careless in the requirements of polite etiquette, for while the speech pattern of the noble is not expected of him (and would be considered affected, and is therefore never used), he is expected to remember that even he is an Amhara, and therefore somewhat "noble". He will be mocked and criticized for frequent impoliteness, such as using the term "enja" (lit. I don't know) which has the connotation of "... and I don't care", instead of the polite "alawqum" (lit. "it has not entered me", i.e. I don't

576 therefore, know). Abusing people with vulgar insults ("*läddäfä*")
195 tends to reflect on the abuser, so that he is considered "*belgena*", a
rude person. Such a person speaks in high-pitched, strident style, to
commoners; while to social superiors he fawns and wheedles, using baby-talk such as "*abbabba*" (daddy) to a lord and "*ammamma*" or "*tatay*"
(mummy) to a lady, in mournful tones of self-abasement and utter helplessness, begging paternal protection and forgiveness as if he were an
infant that had not yet reached the "age of reason".

576 This is mocked, for the Amhara distinguishes between such
servility and non-servile gestures of subordination, such as the "gursha",
the bowing from the hip, and the walking backwards when departing from
[466] the king. Servants and other employees may indicate dissatisfaction at
being short-changed, by bowing not quite so deeply the next time, whereupon a wise lord or employer will take a cue, increase the wage, and
see it acknowledged by a specially deep bow or knee-kiss. Otherwise,
protest will take the form of "murmuring", a semi-articulate protest
which may lead to open rebellion.

576 Kinship terms are sometimes employed, outside the kin context,
601 to communicate respective positions in a situation of differential
social status. Thus, it is respectful to address a status superior as
"*ayya*" (lit. "my dear elder"), used to the father or elder brother. The
extension of this term is fairly recent, in line with improved communication and transportation, but the rustic still uses the more ancient
version, "*ayya*", (which has the same meaning). Because of this, a wit
who does not want to address a rustic as "*ato*" (Mister), sometimes
addresses the ignoramus, in mock respect, as "ayya". (This cheats him
out of his "entitles", reminiscent of the use of the address "Doc" by
Southern Whites to Negroes, avoiding "Mister")

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195 The speech pattern and etiquette to be expected from women,
562 nearly all of whom are illiterate and have no formal education, is

576
195 classified by Amhara men in the category of the "balagär"; as high-
562 pitched, strident, alternately vulgar and wheedling. The term for female, "syēt", also means inconsistent. A woman's voice is not regarded as "soft", which concept is regarded as identical with "polite" and associated with "noble". Noblewomen are considered exempt from this rustic pattern of womanhood, and are expected to behave in accordance with "nobility".

b) Greetings and Address.

576 Formality in interpersonal relations is emphasized in greetings, forms of address, postures and gestures, sometimes in considerable detail and variety, since formal politeness is a culture focus among the Amhara.

Distinctions are made even in familiar address. Thus there are two ways of saying "thou": "antä" - to a child, social inferior, or semi-jokingly to emphasize intimate friendship to a social equal;
"antu" - polite "thou", used to older sibling, or by wife to respected husband.

The polite form utilizes the plural in address; and, in the case of pronouns, the third person plural. Hence :

"gëtoch" - (lit. masters), polite address to employer
"antu" - (thou) polite-familiar address.
"ersu" or "erswo" - (lit. he), polite "you" (singular) to male.
"erswa" - (lit. she) " " " to female.
"ersachäw" - (lit. they) " " (plural), but also used as extremely polite singular address to lord.

The use of the plural communicates that the person addressed is worth several times as much, in material or spiritual worth, as an average person.

576 The master-servant relationship terms are utilized in polite address, to indicate real or pretended servility, or simple politeness:

"_gēta_"! (lit. master) call to stranger on the road.

"_yäne gēta_"! My Master! Address to one's father, priest, great man.

The feudal terms of address have so expanded in use during the past generation, that in recent years some have come to be used as terms of politeness even to respected commoners:

"_emmētēy_" - "Milady!" Formerly used to address noble lady, now polite - warm address to respected woman.

"_atō_" - (derived from "abyeto", with connotation of "at your service"), once used in address to princes and high feudal lords, then to respected male heads of households, now simply used as "_Mister_".

"_woyzäro_" - Lady. Term of polite reference formerly reserved for royalty, then extended to wives of all nobility, now used in reference to any married woman, who is mistress of a household.

Feudal terms used derivations of adjectives, but the only one still in official use is "_Germawi Hoy_" (Oh Magnificence), the proper address to the emperor.

The use of kinship terms toward non-relatives, when seeking kin-like protection, has already been described: e.g. "_tatay_" ("mummy"), babytalk used by adults as endearing-polite address to a woman of child-bearing age; also, by extension, as polite-jocular address to a young girl soon to approach marriage age, e.g. by a teasing young man.

Religious terms are used on many occasions in daily life, as common etiquette, often without conscious awareness that they are religious terms: When two persons meet, the common greeting is as follows:

A: "_endemin allu_", or "_endemin nawo_" (polite) -"How are you?".

B: "_egzēr yemäsgän, dähna nañ_"- "God be praised, I am well."

This interchange is repeated several times before both are assured.

576 When they have seen each other too recently to require this assurance, the greeting is simply "tenã-stellen" - Hello! (lit. "May he, i.e. God, give you health in my stead"). When spelled out, this form becomes "egziabhēr yestellen" (May God reward you for me), which simply means "Thank you!". When someone sneezes, others say to him "yemar" (lit. May He have mercy), to which the sneezer replies "yemarow" (May He be merciful unto you); if the sneezing continues, the interchange is reinforced with "Amēn".

Other terms of politeness are:

"yeqerta" or "yeqerta bälun" - "Excuse me", e.g. when stepped on toes.

"ebakwo" - "Please" (lit. I beg you).

When asking a person, e.g. a visitor, to take a seat, five gradations of politeness can be used to indicate the level of respect:

"quch bäl" - "Sit down (somewhere)", used to young person, (utilizing the imperative grammatical form as well as the familiar singular).

"quch bälu" - "(please) sit down", (using the plural imperative to single visitor), used in inviting adult neighbor to sit.

"tägämmätu" - "(Kindly) take a seat" (using plural of another verb).

"nor" - (lit. "Reside"). Very polite invitation, accompanied
(by low bow, to invite a great man, or long-absent
"yenoru" (friend of status; sometimes re-enforcing it further by
(plural) (use of the plural.

The polite reply, in acceptance to the invitation, is "bäegziabhēr"- (lit. Since God wills it).

It is never polite to say "no", to reject an invitation or negotiation outright. In negotiations, discouragement in a gradual manner is used to communicate politely a negative attitude; e.g. in marriage negotiations already described, in which procrastination is used. In order to avoid the impolite "yälläm" (no), the Amhara prefers to say "naga" (tomorrow), or, even more politely, "eshshi naga" (allright, tomorrow). When refusing to see a visitor, or rejecting an invitation to come to a feast, the standard form of polite rejection

576 is to excuse oneself as indisposed due to "having drunk kosso", the bitter medicine against tapeworm, which medicine indeed incapacitates the patient for several days, and which is taken frequently and even regularly. He may send a written note of apology:

> " Yaderas käkebur (May this reach the Honorable....):
>
> " I have received your esteemed invitation to dinner. Thank you very much for having (thus) honored me. Having travelled, I have drunk medicine and am unable to come. I beg you not to be annoyed with me for remaining away under those circumstances (lit. in such a difficulty)". (footnote 94)

Gestures in greeting must indicate warmth, to be polite. In shaking hands, one does not withdraw one's hand soon, but keeps holding on loosely for several minutes, while talking. Men do this, also women to women, but a man will not hold a woman's hand in greeting unless she is close blood-kin, such as sister or daughter. Men (or women to women) who have not seen each other a long time, fall on each other's necks and kiss each other on both cheeks. The principle of indicating warmth in greeting overcomes the principle of the separation of the sexes in public, so that, especially in the rural areas and the commoner class where expressive behavior in public is more tolerated than in the upper class of nobility, men may cheek-kiss women in greeting, though not in flirting which must be private.

[584] In spite of many other changes, it is still considered highly improper for a young man and young girl to hold hands when walking on a "shersher" (promenading). Not even the foreign-educated Amhara dare do this, not even in the modern center of Addis Ababa.

Footnote 94 - Eadie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, p. 276.

c) Visiting

574 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry
602 season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When
606 visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bäqçäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqo" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos,
754 lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink
[164] their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors,
576 are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

574 576 visitors screw up their faces as if in great agony, even despair, and utter the long, subdued wail "gyye". Religious expressions on such occasions are "ersiabhēr yatnawo" (May God give you health), or "egzer yemarewo" (May God be merciful to you).

574 539 d) Hospitality and Dining.

Hospitality to kinfolk, members of the secondary group, and other travellers, in that sequence of emphasis, is a major culture focus. Numerous proverbs are often quoted, governing this behavior:

Even a poor man is expected to give what he can, even if he can offer little more than a pleasant face:

> "More than his food,
> his face pleased me."

Refusal of hospitality for the night is castigated:

> "He has let me be eaten by the hyena" (at night).

A stingy host, who could well afford generosity, is mocked:

> "He goes about, attended by 90 retainers;
> but in his house famine reigns".

A host is advised to make his invitation specific as to the day:

> "A dog, called for the right day,
> arrives on his own feet".

574 262 A host is expected to urge the guest to take freely of profferred food and drink. An invitation to "take coffee" is frequently the formula introducing a complete dinner. Staples readily available, unlike dinners that require preparation, include barley beer ("tälla"), roasted barley grains ("gebs golo"), roasted peas ("shembera golo"), boiled corn grains ("nashella"), milk, eggs, limp bread ("enjira"), and except among the very poor, coffee beans, which are roasted, crushed and boiled in front of the guest.

Dinner is regarded as a feast ("dogges" or "gebber") and should include meat and butter, so that it is impolite to invite anyone on

574 262 Wednesday or Friday when no animal products can be consumed; the months of lent also interrupt the frequency of visiting.

To honor a "great man" ("telleq saw") the host presents him with a live sheep, select, with a heavy tail, then has it slaughtered and cooked in a spicy and peppery sauce ("wot"). In place of barley bear he will offer honeywater ("bers") or even honeymead ("täj"); the bread will be served smeared with spiced butter. A poor man, forced to substitute chicken for sheep, can at least indicate that he honors the guest by giving him the choice morsel - the wing: The proverb says:

[539] "The chicken wing
joy brings to the face".

264 Etiquette in eating follows these procedures: The hands are washed prior to consuming bread or meat (though often with not very clean, muddy river water poured from a clay pot); and washed again after the meal to remove pepper stains of the "bärbäre wot" from the fingers, lest absentminded rubbing of the eye cause painful stinging. Only the right hand is used in eating, for the left is used in the toilet. The right hand is used to rip off a piece of the limp "enjära", dip it into the meat stew, close the piece of pancake-like bread around some morsel and fish it out for immediate consumption. A knife is used only when eating "brundo" (raw beef), at a special feast, to cut off a piece held between the teeth (now, at city feasts, brundo is served pre-sliced into cubes).

Noisy eating ("goräddimä") is permitted in the old tradition as indicative of he-man behavior, but smacking of lips and ceremonial belching, though not criticized, are not emphasized. It is an old custom of Amhara hosts, still followed in rural areas, to pour a mouthful of a profferred drink into their own cupped hands and consume it, before passing the cup to the honored guest or "great man" ("ejun däqno tätta"- lit. he received (cup) with hands (under chin) and drank). This

264 procedure, also called "gämäsä" is in imitation of procedure at the court of nobles, and it is known that kings have always had their special cupbearers ("gānash") who tasted the drink against possible poison, and who also removed any floating debris ("gäffäta") such as beeswax from the drink.

574 The hospitality group on non-kin members which meets most
575 regularly, once a month, is the "mähabbār" association, already described. Based originally on religious private communion, each member plays host once a month to drink from "Mary's cup" ("yämaryam sewa"), to feast, for chant and dance ("säffän") and less formal gossipy entertainment and conversation ("tächäwwäta").

C. Verbal Expressions: Formalities; Wit; Pedagogic Riddles.

192 Emotional exclamations in everyday use are highly formalized:

Pain - "hāyy hāyy" (also if a painful truth "sinks in"; astonishment).

Fear - "woyy" (especially by women, just before a fearful event happens).

Fearful surprise - "oyyi" (e.g. when someone stumbles, or has an accident).

Alarm - "errii" - (cry of alarm; also of great sorrow as in death of kin).

Skeptical surprise - "errä" ("you don't say?!"); Reply: "mut" (abbreviated from "yemut", lit. "May (the emperor die) if this is not true").

Pleasure - "essäy" (to indicate comfort, e.g. when sitting down after having climbed a long, tiring hill).

576 Formal politeness in etiquette always considers the social status
514 of the person addressed. Thus, there are six ways of informing an
192 inquirer that the person he seeks has gone out to defecate or urinate:

Impolite, though not vulgar: "weha afässäsä" - (lit. he poured water).

Polite: "der wätta" - (lit. he went to the bush).

Polite: "däj wätta" - (lit. he went out the door).

576 Very Polite: "shängo wätta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).

514 Extremely Polite: "gwaro zorā" - (lit. he left home).

192 Extremely Polite: "shersher wätta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna has already been cited. 538 Proverbs, "tärät" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

> "Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
> (begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
> "(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
> to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 593 [861] Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539] "(Says the father):

> "Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
> nor plow the sky,
> nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

> "The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
> the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
> water, in a pot it is steamed".

524 Boys, from the "age of reason" onward, tease each other with riddles in endless inventive games, such as:

[539] "(Question)":

"In its youth, white hair,
in its maturity, brown,
in its old age, red.
What is it?"

"(Reply)": "Wot". (Red-golden peppersauce).

538 Like medieval bards, Amhara entertainers (azmari) and talented individuals tell of incredible and wonderful happenings of all kinds, stories called "tarik" (synonymous, in Amharic, with history). Often these use as their base historical or pseudo-historical events, and expand on them, experimenting with persons, plots, additional details, etc. Very popular bases are the Royal Chronicles of Abyssinia, "tarik nägäst", fanciful stories about Alexander the Great, and Biblical plots, especially Apocryphal.

D. Artistic Expression: The Art of Insult and Mockery.

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578 A person who is clever at the art of insult is given grudging admiration even by his opponents, and is called "bäräläsy lachä" (lit. one who shaves with his tongue). He can insult or mock so subtly that he may leave non-initiates in doubt, yet have full effect on the victim. On the other hand, a coarse person who insults people indiscriminately, regardless of propriety of person or circumstance, is despised ("gärta af").

Mockery is sometimes used for positive as well as negative purposes, especially in pedagogy, but insults are always more or less negative. Mockery, if used to teach a lesson, often employs proverbs;
578 using metaphors, so that the person criticized must think - which
195 might lead to his mending his ways:
539 To mock a useless act: "(it is like) a co[illegible] on a shaven head,
(like) trousers to carry dur - in".

To mock false pride:

> "A blind man, when he became (too) proud, (to accept help) on his toga defecated".

To mock aggressiveness beyond social station, especially in a young man:

> "The mouse that wants to die,
> goes to touch the nose of the cat".

Insults, however, do not have this benevolent, educative quality. Instead, they are antagonistic - though in carefully differentiated degrees. In general, an insult may be extremely severe, severe, medium severe, or light, in degree. Insults are considered of greater weight when directed at persons of higher status, (more severe).

There are two major categories of insults:

a) Insults directed at the group to which the insulted person belongs: his racial (usually slave-descent); religious (non-Coptic); ethnic (linguistic-regional) stereotype.

b) Insults directed at his individual personality shortcomings, intended to shame him for having failed to measure up to what is expected of him in society.

Racial insults commonly include:

"shembəra ras" (lit. peahead, i.e. peppercorn hair) or "barya tägur" (slave hair), both severe insults referring to slave ancestry, by reference to hair typical of the Shanqalla (negroid tribe in the border lowland). This is now a jail offense.

"täqwara" (lit. dark one). Light insult directed at Shanqalla ex-slave, teasingly.

"wellaj" (half-slave). Severe insult directed at a person of doubtful ancestry.

Religious insults; often involved also in ethnic insults:

"afotam" (lit. sheathed, encased) - uncircumcised. Directed at "pagan" lowlanders, and lower ethnic castes such as the "Faqi" tanners. Medium severe.

195 578 "kaffir" (infidel). Insult used by islamized Abyssinians and Arabs against Coptic Abyssinians. Severe insult which may lead to bloodshed.

"Wogto" - has the connotation of "one who will eat anything". Refers to the hippopotamus hunters on Lake Tana and the lower Blue Nile. Medium severe insult. (People who subsist on hunting are despised.)

There is also a whispered insult relating to supernatural black magic, "buda", used against persons accused of descent from ironsmiths (e.g. Falasha).

b) Insults directed against individual shortcomings include:

Weak, soft, womanish (directed at a man):

"syēto" - womanish. Directed at chattering male. Medium severe.

"lämata syēt" (lit. begging woman). Severe. Directed at flatterer and feigner.

"dumetan" (lit. full of flour), suggesting that he is a coward, who would prefer woman's work, such as grinding, to male behavior.

Generally unsteady character:

"zäläbabeda" - unsteady person. Severe insult.

"jebrarra" - childish, silly jabberer, or a drunk. Severe insult for a man.

"täsedeb zärrättä" - speechless, e.g. man who cannot reply to insult.

"arho" (lit. wandering minstrel woman), prey to many evils. Medium severe.

"kärratta" - vagabond, loafer. Medium severe.

Mannish (directed at a woman):

"wändawända" - Severe insult directed at a shrewish, aggressive woman.

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Stupidity:

"dăncworo"(lit. deaf). Fool. Frequently used. Medium to severe.

"dengay ras" (lit. stone head). Slow-witted person. Light insult if directed at a youngster, medium toward low-prestige adult, severe toward other adult males.

Laziness:

"zefeq" - Medium severe insult, directed at woman who evades her chores, and who dresses in her best embroidered toga on a weekday.

Hypocrisy:

"zemban l̄eba" (lit. thief with eyes full of flies): Directed at cunning man who pretends not to see but looks out to take what he should not; like a "blind" thief in the night. Medium severe.

"wälmatta" - vain flatterer, good-for-nothing. Severe insult.

Bastard:

"men abbatu" (lit. who is his father). Very frequently used especially by lower class, even against balky mules to "let off steam", but nevertheless considered very severe insult.

Crossness:

"yähamus feträt" (lit. Creature of Thursday; i.e. the day the animals were created). Directed at animal-like behavior. Severe insult.

Supernatural insult:

"ganēnam" - full of evil spirits. Severe insult.

Insults of category a) may lead to serious brawls, even kin feuds, for insults against the group are regarded as affecting also the following generations:

[539]

> "(If the father is hated), the child will not be kissed, when he (the child) speaks, no one will smile".

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578 Insults of category b) however, may be noisy, sound violent, involve much high-pitched repartee, with the adversaries screaming at each other. But since such individual insults are regarded as a "battle of wits", they rarely even lead to fisticuffs, though, to foreign observers, such encounters seem only a hair's breadth removed from serious bloodshed, and the adversaries seem to lean against each other physically (though now actually). For, even a severe insult is not regarded as a "fighting word", rather as an almost theatrical, almost ceremonial exchange. There may be much wiving of a corner of a toga in the opponent's face, as in court. The exchange may end in mutual exhaustion, physically and nervously. The entertainment aspect is not lost on the onlookers, who thoroughly enjoy this and egg on
[692] the adversaries. Sometimes curbstone arbitrators ("astaraqi") are appointed to act as "peacemakers".

[554] A person of nobility is not supposed to engage in such public battles of insult, rather employs subtle means of implied antagonism. Even a commoner Amhara may imitate the indirect behavior pattern in a situation of antagonism, e.g. to indicate to a neighbor that he is not wanted, yet without letting the public know it (thus saving face for the neighbor). He may invite him, greet him politely, ask him to wait (standing) while stools "will be brought". When no stools are brought, after some time, the neighbor leaves, never to return. The proverb says:

[539] > "So that he will not talk (against us), invite him;
> (yet) so that he will not eat, move him about".

In this manner, polite antagonism is indicated, without making a public enemy.

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E. Gestures and Postures.

201 Meaningful gestures accompany speech quite often among Amhara, occasionally substitute for speech, though not often. Amhara is too proud of ability for self-expression to forego speech in any but sharp dominance-subordination situations, in which case he may resort to non-verbal signs.

Gestures may take the form of signs, signals or symbols, and often emphasize status domination, e.g. noble versus commoner peasant; or patriarchal versus younger generation; or master toward servant.

To symbolize affect, the dominant person may lift part of his toga off his own body and cover the head and shoulders of the subordinate, e.g. a younger person, or a female. This gesture symbolizes protection, shielding, expressed as "gashey" (my shield). Affect can also be symbolized by the "gursha" (described earlier).

201 695 Formal antagonism appears most clearly in court "before the judge" ("bädarya fit"). When appearing on the stand, the speaking adversary folds his toga so that he has an ample piece of cloth available to wave in the face of the silent adversary, and, to emphasize his protest and revolt against injustice, even in the face of the judge until restrained. He may raise his "wager" to emphasize the justice of his case and his certainty as to the outcome; using the following signals:

"I bet honey" - by licking his palm,

"I bet a horse" - extending arms and waving hands to imitate gallop,

"I bet a mule" - by raising hands to ears, indicating long ears of a mule, and moving them up and down.

The judge carefully notes the wagers in his book, since he will receive the wager of the loser, and, except for a "tax" to the governor, can keep most of it, in the old tradition.

201 Symbolism in commerce serves to give legal validity to a trade 675 agreement, since bystanders thus become witnesses. When buyer and 196 seller agree, the right hands are waved up and down, which attracts attention, then palm touches on palm (with fingers stretched away). This may or may not be reinforced by the verbal oath "Hayle Selassye yemut" (May the emperor die, if I lie). This commercial symbolism is followed especially in important transactions, such as livestock.

201 196 Symbolism in political life takes the form of rythmic handclapping, ("anc̣hc̣häṭäc̣hc̣häbä"), not to be confused with Western applause. It is performed as a greeting, as acknowledgement of superordination. It does not follow public proclamation. These are greeted with respectful silence, but women may indicate actual or pretended joy with their joyshout "ellel". Amhara public opinion ("astäyayät") sometimes signals negative reaction to official proclamations by "murmuring" in a delayed stage-whisper, and though officialdom traditionally pretends to ignore public opinion, it usually employs paid listeners who mix with the public to trace any "murmuring" to its sources. For, in the past, ignored murmurings frequently led to rebellions.

Anger, whether silent or accompanying verbal battles, is signalled by wide opening of the eyes ("afäṭṭäṭa"), or a furious, intent stare ("täfaṭṭätä").

201 Directional signs are made by moving eyelids and eyelashes, particularly by nobles or persons imitating their subtle ways. To communicate "get rid of this person", I want to talk to you alone", the eyelids wink up and down ("taqqäsä"); to signal "come out of the hut, I want to talk to you outside", the pupils and eyelashes work in the direction of the door. Men may give such signals as frequently as women.

201 177 The signal of expressing desire to enter consists of knocking with the entire fist ("koräkkomä" - onomatopoetic). Finger-knocking

201 [177] has been introduced only since the Italian occupation.

The gesture indicating sour-bitter taste (which are not differentiated; and collectively called "märara"), consists of slowly shaking the head sideways ("tängäshäggäsha"); sometimes reinforced by the verbal exclamation of pain, "ayye" or "hayy!".

516 Postures differentiate between the status of the master and that of the servant. The master indicates his "free" status by sitting way back on the stool or bench, straight, in a position which would require special effort to rise and therefore emphasizes that he does not expect to have to jump up at anyone's command. A servant may not sit in presence of the master, or must sit lightly so as to be ready to perform any duty for which he may be called upon at any moment. To indicate respect, a servant carries out his duties on the run (as "on the double" in the Western armies), while the master is present.

The correct posture in sitting is called "kurkum alä", sitting "folded up"; the legs bent at the knees, the feet far back and partly hidden, since it is "rude" to sit with legs stretched out beyond the knee. But the thighs may be spread, especially when seated on a mat on the ground, even in the case of peasant women who wear the anklelength, heavy cotton gown. To sit with legs crossed (Turkish fashion) is frowned upon as the posture of "barya", the Muslim or "pagan" ex-slaves from the Sudan; considered a rude and lazy position by the Amhara. The proper posture of the Amhara, if seated on the ground, is a squatting position, on the hips, never on the heels; feet flat on the ground, knees high and spread, the toga arranged so as to cover the knees and shins even when jodphurs are worn.

201 554 Facial expression of a high-status Amhara (noble, priest, elder) assumes a stoic appearance. The jaw muscles are relaxed, the mandible slightly dropped, the eyes half-closed but alert, breathing very quiet, [195] the voice in even tone (in contrast to the strident whine of the argumentative peasant-gabbar).

201 argumentative peasant-gabbar). The body expresses almost the permanence 554 and immobility of a statue, as if the high-status person could not be surprised or dismayed by anything, certain that all things due him will come to him.

516 The famous "Nilotic stance", stork-like, in which the person stands on one leg, resting the foot of the other against the inner knee of standing leg, is found in the Amhara only among young boys, and an occasional, low-class adult.

554 481 In walking, nobles of the old school walk slowly, somewhat heavily, as if in formal procession. Members of their retinue carry their cane, overcoat, etc. By contrast, laborers carrying heavy burdens walk catlike, largely on the instep, and fairly fast.

F. The Language of the Toga ("shamma").

201 291 The toga is used in so many different, formal ways by the Amhara to express moods, occasion and social status in the presence of persons of differing social status, that the language of the shamma has been likened to the "language of the buffalo robe" of the Plains Indians of America (footnote 95).

The most common way of draping this usually 6 ft. long, 2-1/2 ft. wide garment can be described as "out-going"; called "tälabbäsä"; The toga is draped around the upper body so that it gives a turtleneck effect, the embroidered border extends from the shoulder to the waist. This may indicate that the young wearer is in an out-going, expansive mood, considers himself a gay blade going into town in a holiday mood; when worn this way by an older man, it expresses that he is a sober, respectable citizen, in an optimistic mood, going to meet persons of equal status.

Footnote 95 - Coon, C. S.: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 116.

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To express a sad mood, the toga is not draped, but let hang full length, a corner even trailing in the dust, another corner slung across the front over the opposite shoulder, and the wearer walks with eyes sadly downcast. This way of wearing it is called "ashnäffäṭa", cloaking the body from the neck down. The method of careless cloaking symbolizes that the wearer is unhappy, depressed, overcome with the sadness of life.

To express reserve, the person who feels himself superior in the presence of people whom he considers inferior, or strangers, can emphasize his dignity by lifting the turtleneck effect of his draped toga to cover his mouth. This form is called "qenteb täḳänannobā", connoting pride, so that persons who act proud beyond their station are criticized by this term. But in the presence of strangers, who might be carriers of "buda" (evil spirits, evil eye), which might penetrate into the body through the mouth, this is considered excusable.

To emphasize an even greater degree of reserve, the top part of the toga may be lifted further to cover the nose also. This is called "kofānnänä", and a man who makes too frequent use of it is criticized as "abba kofenanē" (lit. father of too much pride); it is also called "täshkäräkkärä" (lit. veiling), for only the eyes are left free. This prevents evil spirits from entering through the nostril, while the eyes are regarded as potentially offensive weapons, not vulnerable. This form indicates great superiority, and is therefore limited to men; an occasional woman doing this would be sharply mocked as "mentally unbalanced", unless she walks with her husband who is thus attired, imitating him, e.g. while passing through a strange neighborhood, draped for protection ("tïronattäfä"). It signals "keep your distance", "don't touch me".

To express great respect, when in the presence of a "great man", (e.g. when appearing formally before a feudal lord, in the old days, 201 291 among rustics still today), the toga is draped so that the upper part of the body is bare or at least not covered by the toga, while the corner flaps may rest on the slightly raised forearms, possible accompanying the begging gesture of the outstretched palms; this is called "awwärarräda" (possibly from "woräda", district lord to whom one reports). Combining respect with utility, dancers (azmari) often drape this way, since much of the Amhara dance is upper-body, thus left disentangled, and enabling the dancer to lift the loose corners while swaying in tempo of the musical accompaniment.

Before the judge ("bädanya fit"), the toga is partly draped as in respect, with the difference that one corner is left as large as possible; to enable the wearer to shake an accusing toga-corner in the face of the adversary while on the witness stand, or in protest toward the judge while loudly praying that heaven may give "light" to the judge, or while raising one's wager as to the outcome.

When going to church ("beta kristyān") the toga flaps are draped across the chest so that, in crossing to the opposite shoulder, they form the sign of the cross. When on the way to the house of the great man, this drape is used, for then the flaps can be dropped on the forearms, in the gesture of respect, without draping.

Women usually drape the toga so that part of the shamma acts as a skirt-apron ("sherreṭ"). When in an "out-going" mood, the other part of the shamma covers one arm (usually the left) and the other shoulder. When at work, the top flaps are slung over the chest, leaving both arms completely free for work ("asharräṭä").

291 Besides these expressive drapes of "language of the shamma", there are several utilitarian ways of draping it which communicate merely the work being done at the time, or represent mere patterns of draping for comfort;

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddäna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägäddägä" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "mäkkätä" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adägäddägä" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("näṭäla") may be rolled around the head - "ṭämäṭṭämä". Hence, the turban of priests is called "mäṭämṭämiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "däbtära" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäshshäbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into
291 disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as
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685 "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

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291 longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the
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685 shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

535 Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the zar cult, the victory dance ("gurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the zar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoetic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Oho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qärärto").

"Yebähalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Wardaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Ababa" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of loyalty to the central government, since the late 19th century.

"Aya-ho-ho, māta näw delēy" - (lit."Ayahoho, tonight will be my victory), signifying "we'll win yet"; also sung teasingly at weddings.

The "hotu", though a strictly male dance, is often accompanied by the rythmic handclapping ("anc̣hābäc̣hc̣häbä") of the women; also the female joyshout "ellel"; sometimes also by the "käbäro" drum.

While the individual dance, "fukkara" is most often used at weddings, the collective "hotu" is performed at public occasions such as church parades on Ṭemqät (Epiphany), St. George's day, etc; also on some of the new civil holidays such as the annual coronation anniversary.

Some observers have regarded the "fukkara" boast dance as more Middle Eastern, and the "hotu" (including the possible equivalent "dankira" leap of the zar cult) as more African. But it is doubtful whether such a distinction can be made.

The entertainment dance, "eskesta", is a shoulder dance performed by either a man or woman, recently more commonly by women. Of all the dances, it seems the most typical Amhara, for the performer if too proud to use hips or legs as southern Ethiopians would. It is performed by "azmari" or similar professionals, wherever crowds gather, e.g. at "inns" near a marketplace. In the dance, the shoulders are moved rapidly in a variety of motions, often circular, with intermittent forward and backward jerks, to the beat of a drum. A teasing element is sometimes introduced by women performers, who thrust their breasts forward and make the cross suspended from the matab neckcord dance on and off the bulging breasts. The performer accompanies the motion with audible gasps of air drawn through the teeth, producing sounds like "hs,hssess,hst,hssesscess", hence the name "eskota". The audience, when moved, loosens up in the

535 shoulders and hisses along ("tekäsha wärrädä"). This dance, therefore is often used to warm up an audience before the next performer begins the "zäffän" chant, the high-pitched wailing song of the women.

533 The "zäffän" chant is accompanied by less frenzied shoulder movements, the head raised forward, and the singer chanting "up" at the sky, not forward toward the audience. This gradually changes the performance from the sensual to the spiritual. There are several variations of "zäffän":

"zäffän awärrädä" - loud, strident, high-pitched chant, mostly performed by women in public entertainment, in which the audience soon participates as chorus; accompanied by shoulder dance.

"zäffän engorgorra" - softly hummed chant, expressing philosophical sadness. Frequent at portions of the funeral chants and at ecclesiastical chanting of poetry ("genyē") performed by male dabtara.

Professional entertainment singers may be recognized "azmari" hired e.g. for weddings, when they also play such musical instruments as the "masenqo" (single-string violin) and "qrar" (banjo). Or they may be wandering minstrels ("hamina").

The "qena" sung in church by the "däbtära" choristers are rhymes that follow pattern and content of the psalms. Young dabtara compete with each other both as composers and as performers, for their careers depend on the critiques of the old connoisseurs. Little boys begin to chant the syllabic alphabet, as soon as they go to church school, and this pedagogic recitation is called "meleket" or "yäzēma melekt" (Geez "malekta"), which may originate from the word for "gospel", or the word for "trumpet" ("mäläkt"). Chants taken from the church are sung by children in a similar manner as Western Christmas carols: "Säba segäl" (three wise men), "Buhe bälu" (let all say Buhe), etc.

533 To European ears the music of the Amhara sounds like a continuous cacophony, like the tuning up of a Western orchestra. But once accommodated to it, the sentiments expressed in the high-pitched chanting, the ecstatic pitch of emotions of the priests and däbtära, is recognized, when they sing for hours the chants they know so well by heart.

One foreign musicologist characterizes the timbre of voice in some Abyssinian chants as "harsh, forced and strident, unlike the singing in Negro Africa which is usually soft and rounded" (footnote 96). But he appreciates the artistry by which boy singers change the register, dropping from the usual falsetto to chest voice, and octave below, then move back into the falsetto; also, the interesting polyphonic technique, in which the second voice sings the melody introduced by the first voice, in the same pitch, but with delayed entry, so that a "canon" or "round" results, which is abandoned toward the end, the two voices ending in unison. Thirds seem to be preferred, though fourths and fifths occur among the voices.

Dabtara are always at work experimenting with minor alterations, [177] which may in time accumulate. Furthermore, certain regional specializations exist: Arabic music affects Abyssinian music wherever Muslims live in sizeable numbers, especially in Tigre province, and near the Sudanese border. Here the wailing Arabic chant that breaks off abruptly, has infiltrated.

533 178 Modern, national Ethiopian music dates only to the 1920's. It includes the modern national anthem and other patriotic songs such as "Lion of Judah". The music, often composed on order, by foreigners or

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Footnote 96 - George Herzog, quoted by Leslau: Chansons Harari. Rassegna di Studi Etiopici VI, p. 161, Rome 1947.

533 resident Armenians, ranges from vague "oriental" melodies to European
178 melodies of the marching variety. But secular songs, grassroots folksongs, are increasing with the use of public loudspeakers and growing up of a somewhat more modern educated generation singing love songs with less restraint than in the past, such as "yännē shega, yännē qonjo" (my peach, my beauty).

534 Musical instruments are largely divided into two categories in the mind of the Amhara; those used for the church service, notably percussion instruments; and those used for entertainment, notably string instruments, and wind instruments. Drums are used in both categories, however.

The reason percussion instruments predominate in church, is that musical instruments used in church have the role of marking time, in the chant-dances. Moreover, there is no independent instrumental music in the Abyssinian tradition, not even in organized entertainment.

Percussion instruments include the following:

Drum - "nägarit", the huge, barrel-like symmetrical drum over which skins are stretched at both ends, made to accompany rythmic (church) dances. It has a wooden body, 3' to 5' in length. It is considered the aristocratic drum, for in the past it was beaten to assemble the population for war or to hear a royal proclamation. (The modern government publication printing decrees is appropriately called "Nagarit Gazetta"). In the past it was carried on muleback in military expeditions, and preceded the entry of a governor into a province. Since it is heavy, it is suspended from a shoulder strap and carried by the younger men. It is beaten by the flat fingers and half the palm, while the drummer keeps time by swaying his upper body.

534 Kettledrum - "kăbäro", somewhat smaller drum, made of wooden bowl with a skin stretched over the mouth. It takes a variety of shapes, but unlike the nägarit it is not symmetrical, one end being smaller than the other. Sometimes it is a frame with beatable skins at both ends. It is used both in church and for less aristocratic occasions, such as entertainment dances, chants of warriors. Usually it fits into niches used as windows in church,/ or hangs under the overhanging roof of a private hut.

Sistrum - "ṣänaṣel" (onomatopoetic) resembles the ancient Egyptian variety. It is usually cast from brass through the cire perdue method. The sides are then perforated many times. Round, resonant metal discs glide on wires that connect the two sides. They are made of sheet metal, now often cut from tin cans. The grip is of brown or black wood. The whole instrument does not usually exceed 8".

Gongs - "däwäl", traditionally were of phonolithic stone suspended in front of churches, used as church bells to call to services. They are beaten with another rock or batter of iron, either called "yădäwäl mäncha". The Falashas, being ironsmiths, possess a flat iron disc almost a foot in diameter, which they suspend from a string from a finger, and beat with an iron spike, achieving a distinct gong sound.

String instruments used in public entertainment, include:

Lyre - "gerar" or "kerar", banjo-like, with 5 or 6 cords made of prepared goatgut (hence the name, from "karrara", stretched). It takes various forms and sometimes resembles a guitar. It is the most common string instrument in Abyssinia. Some observers think it recalls the antique Mediterranean lyre. The sound chamber consists of a wooden basin (sometimes a castoff Italian pot), over which goatskin is stretched. This instrument is usually played by women, accompanying ballad-like love songs, etc. All the strings are struck at the same time, with a small, hard, thin, flat piece of leather, giving a harmonious sound. The instrument is used at weddings, or to attract customers to inns - for it is a "female instrument. It is also common in the Sudan.

Single-string violin, or "spike fiddle" - "*masengo*". The sound chamber consists of a diamond-shaped wooden frame, over which a specially tanned goatskin ("*mälägomiya qoda*") is stretched tight. The wood is preferably from the jasmin tree ("*tänbālal*") (jasminum floribundum, the berries of which are used to make ink). The semicircular bow is spanned with black horsehair ("*chera*"), hence playing this instrument is called "*chera tächäwwätä*", shortened to "*cherawwata*". Only *males* play the masenqo, usually male professional *azmari*, to accompany singing. At big feasts, as many as a dozen may play together. The music played on it is usually very high-pitched, accompanying female or male singers. Subject matter includes Songs to the Emperor, feudal war songs, etc. It is considered by the Amhara, more typically Amhara than the kerar. It actually does resemble the Arab "Rabab" (footnote 97).

Footnote 97 - Rohrer: Beiträge zur Materiellen Kultur der Amhara, 1932, p. 157.

534 Harp - "bägänna", has 10 to 12 cords, played with a soft stroke and special fiddlestick ("yäbägenna mäncha") of horny skin. It is reserved for rare and important occasions, when it is played before high clergy on religious occasions, or before royalty. Identified with King David, it is used to accompany spiritual and philosophical chants and laments. But in recent years it has been used more often in public entertainment in larger cities.

Wind instruments are not much used in organized fashion.

Fife - "washint", is a simple affair of bamboo, about 20 inches long, usually with four holes, producing as many tones. They are made and played by boys guarding cattle. The music has a bubbling quality that is believed to sound like running water, hence is attractive to the cattle and sheep. "Shämbäqo" bamboo is preferred. Sometimes an impromptu orchestra is formed by boys, when some bring drums to play in accompaniment.

Fife - "embilta", a larger, thicker fife of bamboo pipes, employing no stops, played by blowing strongly across a mouth hole (similar in principle to the Western pipe organ). Each pipe gives a single, true, tone, determined by its dimensions. Three or four different pipes are usually used together - though several blowers are then necessary. This creates a polyphony of high-pitched tones, very popular, used in accompanying chant-dances in public entertainment. It is widespread in the lowlands also, of Tigre and Eritrea.

Trumpet - "māläkat" is relatively little used. Made of horn or wood, it blows long, solemn tones, used by cattle herders to call the flock, or, by an occasional rustic individual to lead

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534 a cross-country church procession on a saint's day. But modern (leftover Italian) brass trumpets are replacing it for the latter use.

2. Play and Entertainment.

A. Games and Leisure-time Activities.

524 Games are differentiated largely on the basis of age: little boys' games are largely of a hazing type or of imitation of adult behavior; adolescents' games are predominantly competitive; adult games are largely leisure pastimes. In this adult-centered culture, children's games are at the same time freely experimental and directed toward growing up as fast as possible; while an adult would be ashamed to continue playing childish games or to compete with adolescents.

Small children, especially boys, are involved in hazing activities, [863] "bedder", early in life. If they suffer a relapse into "Bedwetting", they are publicly shamed by the older children, and made to urinate publicly into a little trench. Small children are sometimes frightened by older ones with the bullroarer, ("zezzeta" - onomatopoetic), or by imitation of the sound of the hyena at night. Frequency of contact between older and younger children is especially prevalent during the "shut-in" rainy season. At this time, boys age 5 to 12 fight battles, sometimes using waterpistols ("tiqqosh") made of bamboo, with a wooden syringe. When the game gets rough ("entush") they knock each other down with knees (the seat of strength in Amhara opinion) and feet.

Boys of 8 or 9, who aspire to deaconhood at the next New Year holy days, are mock-examined by older boys who have achieved that status. The candidate must carry each of them several times around the churchyard, and must recite and chant liturgical prayers for them for hours. The candidate is punished for any disobediance by being pinched, tied up and otherwise abused.

Little girls play milder games, such as dancing rounds with other

524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("täwaza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

Question: "Where are you from?"

[186 578]

Reply:	Response:
"Begemdir",	"Land of shysters and quibblers."
"Shoa",	"Land of liars and traitors."
"Gojjam",	"Land of sorcerers (buda)."
"Gondar",	"Gossipers and blabbermouths."
"Gurage",	"Land of tricksters."
"Tigre",	"Land of hotheads."

524 754 The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

524 831 When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("yätota beddesh"):

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

524 and rock back and forth. This is largely a projection of human
831 activities, in their minds, for they have all seen actual sexual intercourse among domestic animals.

The puzzle of human sexual activities is reflected in boys' riddles:

Question: "On a precipice, two large gourds hang down, What are they?"
Reply: "Woman's breasts."
Question: "A little goatskin bottle, with mouth and fur.(What is it?)"
Reply: "Vulva ("ems").
Question: "In a porridge of sorghum, a potato expands?"
Reply: "Vulva and penis."
Question: "Hardwood that does not break, skin bottle that is not worn out?"
Reply: "Penis and vulva."

524 Since toys are almost never made for children, they must rely on
533 older children for any that they cannot make themselves, e.g. slingshots.
534 [illegible] aforementioned flute, "washint", is made by boys age 11 to 12, of a hollow light bamboo into which four holes are bored. The flute is blown into from the right corner of the mouth. The following sounds are distinguished:

a) to keep the cows calmly grazing: extended high-pitched sound (dadada dididi).

b) to keep away the leopard: lower-pitched sounds. (A variation is believed useful to attract the leopard to lure him into a covered pit, onto which the flute is then thrown).

c) to accompany the azmari singer, e.g. at a wedding: high-pitched sound in somewhat minor key, as in wooing chants, to suggest emotion.

d) to accompany the "hotu" jump-dance, eg. on holy days as Temqat: a hacked, staccato sound is produced (dada'dodo dada).

526 Organized teams and organized competition characterizes the games of adolescents, especially boys. In ritual battles (aforementioned) and in the "ganna" game, team-moieties ("buden") are formed ("täbwaddänä" - divided into teams), but every participant usually tries to select a personal opponent ("budänä") in the opposite team.

The "gänna" game, played on Christmas, at the public racecourse or meadow, is played with bent, hockey-like sticks ("ganna"), which are used to try to knock a baseball-sized ball, made of skins or linen, beyond a line. The ball may be picked up, thrown in the air and caught at the same spot, to confuse the opponents. The art of insult is freely practiced at the same time, such as; "oho - you play like a castrated ox". The game may last for 2 or 3 days, being resumed every morning.

The "kwas" game, played by boys throughout the dry season, somewhat resembles baseball. The ball is made of goatskin strips, sometimes with mule dung placed inside "to give it bounce". Two teams are formed, with equal distribution of big boys and little boys on each side. The goalkeeper can stop the ball only with his hips, so that he must twist his body so he can see where the ball is coming from. The ball is knocked with a stick, and there is running from base to base. The game is often accompanied, preceded and concluded with formal "boasting", in imitation of the adult, "fukkara", but differentiated as "chäwata" (play). Shouts of "zärraf" (lit. pillage, the traditional shout of conquering soldiers entering a village), encourage the attacking team. There is also an umpire ("ac̣hawach"; lit. master of ceremonies).

In preparation for ritual mock battles, e.g. on the Feast of the Cross, and on Transfiguration (see section on religious calendar), teams of adolescents gather, with their long whips. On less formal occasions, battles can begin with dirty looks, jostling, insults, leading to

526 organized battles similar to the "rumble" of Western culture; but Amhara adolescents are not marked as delinquents, by such activities, especially on the ritual occasions.

The "guks" game of horsemanship, on the feast of Temqat enables late adolescents and young men to show their prowess, on a ritual occasion; this is socially approved, for in gallopping and throwing the imitation lances, in their military maneuvers, they symbolize their readiness to defend their society, their kinsmen, their district, and the Coptic Abyssinian church, i.e. the "faith". The game itself has been likened to the "jarid" game of Arab culture (footnote 98).

524 Among leisure-time games, played by adults of either sex, and also by adolescents, the most popular is the pebble game called "gäbäta". It is played with a single partner, and there is little intensity to try to win, rather pleasure in shared activity, in a leisurely fashion: Two parallel rows of grooves are carved into a flat rock, 6 grooves in each row. The two players place 4 pebbles in each hole, so that each owns 24 pebbles in 6 grooves at the start. The game consists of passing the little pebbles ("gebeta") from hole to hole ("gudagwad").:

Illustration 1: Positions in the Pebble Game "gäbäta".

Player:

A o o o o o o ⟵ direction of play
1 2 3 4 5 6
B o o o o o o ⟶ direction of play

B begins by removing one pebble from position B6, palms it in his hand. He then takes one pebble from the opponent's position A6, placing it into the A5 groove; he then takes from A4, places pebble in A3
A2, " A1
B1, " B2
B5, " B6 ;

then he completes position A6 by placing in it the originally palmed

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Footnote 98 - Dowson: The Inte and the Arab. Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, 1950, p. 37

524 pebble, thus becoming "owner" of position A6.

Now it is the turn of player A, who can begin anywhere he likes, palming one of his own pebbles, and proceeding as above until he conquers one opponent's position, alway proceeding counterclockwise. There are many variations to this basic procedure. E.g. it is possible to become "partial owner" of a position, in which case the dispute is settled by chance, e.g. by hiding a pebble in one hand and letting the other guess which hand hides it. The player who wins all the grooves wins the game. The loser is called "ayt bälla" (lit. the rat ate him).

This game is regarded as harmless, unless a person becomes so addicted to it that he wastes all his time at it.

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517 Entertainment of adults, especially in the towns, often involves considerable consumption of barley beer, fermented honeymead, and even "araqi". The proverb interprets stages of behavior, in drinking, as follows:

"First cup : Rat", (When one drinks eagerly, like a rodent);
"Second cup : Bee", (When there is buzzing among pleasantly agitated drinkers);
"Third cup : Monkey", (Grimacing, laughing foolishly, sweeping arms);
"Fourth cup : Dog", (When drunkards howl, without control, or depressed).

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487 There are three types of public facilities for relaxation, found in the market-towns; The teahouse, the beer-house, and the mead-house, all of which are sharply differentiated:

The teahouse ("shāy byēt") is fully respectable; it is for men only, no women are supposed to enter it, and even the waiters are male. It is patronized by traders, clerks, minor officials (for high officials and nobles would not want to be seen consuming food or drink in public), police detectives, etc. Talk is largely of business matters and events of the day. The tea is consumed with a great deal of sugar dissolved in it, and a sweet condiment called "fūl", probably of Arab introduction, 275 487 is served with it. Traders and travellers often stop by during the day, and the place usually closes not long after sundown.

275 487 265 The barley-beer house ("ṭälla byēt") is still fairly respectable for people of commoner and lower classes, but not for respected elders or priests. It is operated by women, either matronly married women or "unattached girls", i.e. divorcees. It serves not only as dispenser of beer, but also serves full meals, so that the travelling trader is dependent on it. For as little as Eth. $0.25 (U.S. 10 cents) the patron may obtain a minimal meal of enjara bread, 2 liters of talla beer, and all the roast chickpeas and roasted barley ("qolo") he can eat; meatstew costs more. Often such a restaurant contains an extra room with a bed for the weary traveller to sleep in, and such an inn is then called "meshta byēt" (lit. accommodation house, from "mesht" or "mest", meaning wife), for the traveller has no difficulty in securing a temporary wife for the duration of his local stay, among the divorcees.

275 548 The mead-house ("ṭäj byēt") does not even have the minimal respectability of the talla byet. It is operated strictly for entertainment, i.e. drinking and sexual pleasures. For the owner, usually a clever, middleaged townswoman, it represents one of the few ways of amassing capital and becoming one of the wealthiest local citizens. She controls her waitresses much as a madam would. To protect herself from brawls, which are not infrequent, she also employs, - though they are kept out of sight so as not to frighten off customers, - one or several husky bouncers. The proverb says:

[illegible]

"In the prostitute's house,
all the time a scuffle."

For, even in prostitution a pretense of "temporary wife" is made.

275 548 Even a prostitute would be ashamed to engage in one-night affairs, to engage in sexual activities coldly without at least some minimal affect. She is paid for her services after consumption, or tries to take the man's money while he is asleep, but will not aggressively demand advance payment. Therefore, customers who may develop an interest in the same waitress-prostitute, not rarely fight for her affection, temporary though it is. No prostitute would take more than one man in one night, not only because this would be very shameful, but also her competitors would beat her for such unethical behavior. In the past the "ṭäj byet" was publicly advertised by a red cross painted on the outside wall. During the Italian occupation, protests of the International Red Cross caused removal of this sign, but one still encounters it in remoter areas.

273 [77] The use of an even stronger drink, "aräqi" (arrak), the only distilled drink among traditional beverages, is very likely of Arab introduction; It is on the increase in towns because of exposure to strong European liquor during the Italian occupation, but is not made or consumed in the rural hamlets, not even on feasts. In the towns it is made, usually to fill specific orders, by the wives of soldiers or policemen, to add to the meager income of the husbands, whose salary of Eth$20 - 25 is lower than that of the unskilled laborer (Eth$30 - per month). It is produced from "enselal" caraway seeds, gesho (leaf f fermentation), semi-fermented barley ("beqqel") and dagussa grain, [illegible] of which are crushed, mixed with water, dagussa plant is added, and the fermented mixture is boiled for 10 hours, distilled through a bamboo reed. The finished product is carried, in a European glass bottle, to the customer directly, e.g. the owner of the "ṭäj byēt", and is consumed, because of the higher price, by semi-educated clerks and officials with good salaries, or travelling traders or army or

273 police officers. The visiting peasants, who have just sold the harvest, stick to mead, which, for their taste, is alcoholic enough and expensive enough.

The person who pays for a round of drinks is loudly lauded as "elephant", king of African animals. The "ṭãj byēt" is usually the gayest place in town, well-lit, open until very late at night, equipped with nimble waitresses who, contrary to the usual pattern of female behavior, lightly flirt with the customers, in a semi-childish (therefore subordinate) way.

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177 In recent years, exposure to European alcoholic beverages in the cities had led to attempts to replace thehoney used in "taj" with cheaper sugar, and to add other ingredients to raise the alcoholic content. This is done in many mead-houses in Addis Ababa, but is rejected by the traditional conoisseur, especially in provincial towns like Gondar. Even in the city this is regarded as dangerous, for no one knows just what the experimenter may have added. One common police case is the adding of gasoline to city barley-beer or mead, which competitors sometimes have placed into the competitor's brew so as to ruin her business. An early effect of the exposure to European alcoholic beverages was reported humorously in the 1920's, when the private brewer of the powerful provincial lord Ras Hailu of Gojjam attempted to champagnize the traditional mead (footnote 99).

276 Consumption of tobacco ("tembaho"), which is called "drinking tobacco" if smoked, is still regarded as forbidden by the Abyssinian Coptic clergy, and is therefore rare among Amhara, except for those modern-educated individuals who have been abroad. The latter smoke cigarettes turned out by Ethiopian government monopoly in Addis Ababa.

Footnote 99 - Griaule, M.: D'un Mode Aberrant de Conservation de l'Hydromel au Godjam. Journal de la Societe des Africanistes, IV, Fasc 2, pp. 278-284, Paris, 1934.

276 The Muslims, who smoke freely, even in the provincial towns, especially in the Arab or Muslim-operated teahouses, follow a variety of ways of consuming tobacco. Some use a brown snuff tobacco, "*senqan*" or "*surat*"; a few even chew "*chat*", a stimulant drug chewed in the original leaf, which is far more common in southern Ethiopia. This is held in low prestige by the Amhara, who associate the consumption of traditional tobacco and chat with the customs of Shanqalla and Sudanese ex-slaves. In the 1870's the fanatically orthodox Emperor John, who later died fighting the invading Muslem Mahdi, even forbade the raising of tobacco, but since then it is grown again in small patches in and near towns.

517 The high point of traditional entertainment and recreation is still the traditional feast, the "*deges*" (or "gebber"), featuring special material enjoyments such as raw beef and fermented honeymead; and such emotional enjoyments as watching *azmari* performers do their shoulder dance, their high-pitched song-chants, to traditional musical accompaniment; and, perhaps, receiving a "*gursha*" from the "great man" (*telleq säw*). On less intense occasions, picnics in the countryside and recreational promenading ("*shersher*"), are still the major forms of adult recreation in the long dry season.

275 Not only shame, but also fear, keep many peasants and townsmen out of the "*täj-byet*". Many a peasant, intending merely to take one drink, stays until after dark, then, fearing robbery on his way home or the sharp tongue of his wife, succumbs to the "consolation" of the waitresses; and wakes up the next morning without any of his harvest money. Therefore, travellers prefer to lodge with an "unattached woman", whom they may encounter at a beer-house (*tälla byet*) and who will serve as temporary wife.

B. Sex in Amhara Culture.

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548 The extension of the concept of "temporary wife" to prostitution has already been touched upon in connection with the entertainment aspect of sex. It is this extension which imposes on this activity a characteristic culture pattern, involving the "unattached woman's" hoping to find another husband, and meanwhile serving transient travellers with food, shelter, and even some wifely affect. In return for this partial constraint, the culture pattern rewards the "unattached woman" prostitute with certain minimal respectability. She may actually break the curse of barrenness of a first marriage by bearing a child, and thus finding it easier to find another husband. She also has the chance to experiment in sex, learning from travellers, and teaching the local townsmen and peasants. Most terms meaning prostitute are therefore matter-of-fact, and not insulting ("*shärmuta*" - the most polite reference, regarded as an Arabic loanword; "*galänota*"; "*amänzera*" (lit. recipient of the seed); "*lagärbäga*" (lit. "to the whole country", public woman). However, references to "loose personality, e.g. "*mäsēssenya syēt*" are insulting.

834 A strong constraint placed on the temporary wife - prostitute, as on any other Amhara, is against her sexual intercourse with a Muslim. Infraction of this rule would bring immediate and severe ostracism. Since many of her potential clients are travelling traders, many of whom are Muslims, the temptation is strong to ignore that rule. But if she does, she can seek reinstatement in Amhara-Coptic society, which she is considered to have renounced in consummating a union with a Muslim, by appealing penitently to her confessor, who may then agree to re-baptize her, which is considered necessary.. This will lift the ban of ostracism against her, on her social level.

This religious ban against sexual intercourse with a non-Copt

834 occasionally affects non-prostitutes also. Arab traders, particularly, like to joke with Coptic Amhara women when the latter come to their stores; such as teasingly to refuse to hand over goods after purchase has been made, or, if the customer finds the price on a desired item too high, suggesting that payment might be made "another way". These fixed stores, located near the daily or Saturday markets, feature luxuries rather than what are considered necessities; e.g. sandals, tea, sugar, raisins, necklaces, imported chocolate, etc. A woman deserted by her husband, or divorced, might succumb. On the other hand, Muslim women are much more segregated from menfolk, so that there is little opportunity for an Amhara male to break the rule with a Muslim female.

836 Virginity ("dengel") is expected of girls at first marriage, which occurs about the age of 14 or 15. If she is found by the husband not to be a virgin, and he feels sure of it and insists on his rights, he can divorce her, or go to court against her kinfolk claiming damages as high as Eth$200 - 300. This is rare, however, for at that age most girls are too young to have had much opportunity for complete sexual

584 intercourse. The courtship, apart from the above-described occasions during watch in the fields and on festives - when they are very formal -, consists of what adults condescendingly and smilingly refer to as "mäddarrat", love-whisperings, considered adolescent, during which the boy and girl alternate between childish whisperings and playful hitting at each other. The term is not used for love-making of adults or married couples.

587 Very different is the courtship of the girl after her first divorce, which frequently occurs when her personality matures, often while she is still in her twenties. She prefers an experienced lover.

587 The proverb says:

[539] "He who knows not how to kiss,
his nose he will blow on you."

The divorcee often develops strategy and techniques to win a man of her choice: She may give him a ring to remind him of her when he is away from her; when he visits her, she feeds him "ergo" (thick buttermilk), so he will be sleepy and remain at her house, rather than go to his men friends to gamble. Women have a proverb about men:

[539] "Like a child, (he is attracted) by the ring,
like a cat, (he is attracted) by milk."

If she has a mother who is a good cook, the divorcee will employ this attraction, saying:

[539] "More than the flesh of the daughter,
(he is attracted by)
the butter (i.e. cooking) of the mother."

[832] When this fails, she may enlist the supernatural aid of love amulets, "mästäfaqer", purchased from the däbtära scribe with the man's name inscribed, to inspire love for her in him; and in addition to the fee, may treat the dabtara to beer and sweets to enlist his greatest power on her behalf.

588 If her lover is already married, she may nevertheless establish a "sweetheart" ("mushemma") relationship with him, though she has no claim on "damoz" wages or recognition of this temporary wifehood. This is also one of the few cases in which a woman will try not to have children.

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588 However, a divorcee who was divorced largely on account of her barrenness - and about 25% of the townswomen are barren at least for some years - will try to have a child, even out of wedlock. She will then very likely join the "unattached women" in the streets inhabited

548 588 by them in the towns. Divorcees who are young and still attractive often do not want to return to their kinfolk, especially if they have seen town life and the kin life in remote rural hamlets. Like men doing manual labor, she may go to another district or even province to avoid shaming them. On this street she will usually begin by brewing daily barley beer, or even expand this to a small restaurant-inn performing the housekeeping tasks which she has been taught since early childhood and which are the only trade she knows. Occasionally she will then take in a travelling trader for 3 days or more, cook and bake and brew beer for him, also sleep with him if he desires. She hopes, not rarely with success, that one or the other will make the relationship permanent.

831 Men take great pride in virility, but also in sexual technique. They liken the activity to expertly "riding a horse" ("afärräsä" lit. [842] he rode her like a horse, is used for "defloration"). Men believe that it is frequency of intercourse, each night or several times each night, that brings conception. The popular, vulgar name for coitus is "bädda" (related to "bädäbbädä", he beat, whipped; shook with fever). Variations in sexual technique are referred to as "mett" (lit. hits). An impotent male is mocked as "alecha" (lit. sauce without pepper).

There is a sharp distinction between references that are "rude", consisting of direct references to sexual organs and activities; and veiled language used to refer to such matters, if at all, before an elder, priest, or upper-class person. The former is referred to as "yäafär cal" (lit. light matters), connoting "shameful matters". This includes such direct names as "ocla" for penis ("jälla" is even more vulgar), "yäocla ferey" (lit. fruit of the penis) for testicles, "ems" for vulva. Curiously enough, overt loud expression of these terms are heard only from little boys, e.g. when, during the rainy season, they

831 run to women, carrying ferns (symbolic of the vulva), and tease them with shouts of "ems anqetqet" (quivering vulva).

Polite references to sexual matters usually employ biblical terminology, requiring at least some formal, traditional education. They include such terms, wholly or partly from the old Geez language still used in liturgy, as "abalä zär" (lit. master of the seed) for male genital organs in a generic sense; "bellet" (lit. divisions) for differences between male and female sex; "akalat" (lit. part of body) for male and female, or "affärät sega" (lit. flesh of modesty).

[793 834] Coptic priests are not supposed to indulge in sexual intercourse even with their wives the night before they are to officiate in church, and they therefore avoid sleeping on the same "alga" (bedstead) that night.

834 Modesty of body exposure, particularly of women, is the general pattern, though children may be barely clothed in ragged shifts leaving much skin bare (see life cycle, etc.). In fact, deliberate exposure of the body is regarded as a sign of madness, and this is the popular reaction to Western pictures of "bathing beauties" in swim suits. When bathing, persons will join members of their own sex and go to secluded places in the river. On the feast day of Temqät, (Epiphany), some rustic men strip and swim in the pool blessed by the priests, but women do not. Breasts may be visible during nursing, but if there are strangers around, they will be covered to prevent any possible evil eye from drying them up.

832 Love magic is widely and strongly believed in, particularly since it is supplied by the quasi-church functionary, the däbtära scribe. He is first called upon to write amulets, which are still respectable and, can be worn in outwardly visible containers, by women, for no one can know that the amulet is not directed against the devil. But the magic activities of the däbtära, secretly, go far beyond that.

832 Men, particularly young men, are also among his loyal customers.

The däbtära may be called upon to embark upon a magic strategy designed to bewitch a person of the opposite sex so as to fall in love with the client, and also to render the beloved impotent or frigid to all rivals. On a moonlit night, or when unobserved, the dabtara will go to bush or field to seek a certain root, then write the magic bann on a piece of linen, including the names of the persons to be joined in the love bewitchment. This bann is then read over the root as many as 49 times. The root is then chewed, and the masticated paste is carefully preserved for application as soon as possible, to the skin and clothing of the beloved. To do this, tactics such as feigning anger at the beloved and spitting the paste at her so she will not suspect, may be resorted to.

To render a beloved faithful and thoroughly frigid to all rivals may require an even more difficult strategy. The ideal method is to wipe her vulva, preferably the vagina, with the cloth that contains the magic bann, on the pretext of cleaning her after coitus. Conversely, a woman employing this magic may use the cloth to wipe his genitals after coitus, to render him impotent with other women. If the bewitched finds the cloth, he or she can break the spell by washing it in a running river that contains fish. Even if not all of the ink or dye comes off, if fish can nibble at it, it is believed that the spell is broken and carried off.

There are many variations of this basic procedure. Some däbtära "prove" their power to sceptical clients by "testing" the efficacy of the bann and the paste. They may agree to try it out on one of the "unattached women" that earn a living by brewing daily barley beer. They enter her "tälla byēt", order beer, and the dabtara, apparently

515 chewing on an olive twig preparatory to polishing his teeth with it, which is general common procedure, spits out what the woman believes

832 to be ends of the twig, actually magic paste, "accidentally" hitting her. They pay for their beer, and leave. The next day, the dabtara takes his skeptical client past the same beer-hut, and lo and behold, the woman calls out an invitation to them, and refuses payment for the beer consumed. The client is now convinced.

This love magic is done secretly because it is considered highly unethical. At least the dabtara is expected to "release" the person "helplessly bewitched" after a while, and not leave the victim in this condition forever.

The däbtära is believed to know, from books on magic, not only the efficacy of banns and plants, but also of animals. His favorite animal is believed to be the chameleon ("zäläbabäda"), particularly in love magic, ordered by women. The animal is dried, crushed to powder, and the woman then mixes this with her urine. She must read the formula out loud, containing her name and the name of her husband or the man she wishes to hold against all rivals, then throw the mixture in the air - to be carried by the winds and spirits.

751 The dabtara is believed also to have medicinal magic. Some "careful" men, before going to the adventures of the mead-house ("ṭäj-byēt"), go to his house to drink a magic potion to protect them from venereal disease that night.

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838 When a woman consistently acts like a man, or a man like a woman, it is believed that there is some biological "mistake of God". In the case of a woman, she is likely to be blamed and even insulted, called "mannish" ("wändawăndē"). This term is used if she acts independent, takes interest only in masculine weapons and activities, and speaks in hard, insubordinate ways. If she is physically a tall, powerful virago, she is called "wändagäräd" (lit. male-female), a female with too much

828 838 masculinity.

Male transvestites are more often pitied than blamed, for the populace feels even more certain that this is a biological "mistake of God". For, they argue, a woman might try to fool people and assume male prerogatives, but what male would want to surrender the privileges of being a man? He is called "fenafent" (lit. hermaphrodite) and his male organs are believed to be sadly deficient in structure, despite visible male secondary sex characteristics.

This transvestite usually dresses in a woman's embroidered cotton dress or skirt, drapes his toga (shamma) like a woman, likes to work at embroiding the green adornment of a woman's dress, does women's chores, following them at their daily occupations and social gatherings. He dislikes the company of men. Transvestites are relatively rare, and they live as individuals, not forming a society of their own, for they are tolerated. Only their kinfolk are ashamed of them, so they leave them and go to live in another province, (like a tailor unwilling to shame his kin by doing manual labor). Women tolerate a transvestite "like a brother"; men are not jealous of him even though he spends all his time with the womenfolk. Often the transvestite is an unusually sensitive person, quick to anger but intense in his personal likings, sensitive to cultural diffusion from the outside world, expecially those carried by Arab traders; and Muslim Arab traders are often the only male social contacts he tolerates.

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 [312] Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge 5¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

515 washing of the body and frequent washing of clothes, and an individual housewife who takes it upon herself to wash more than expected is noticed as different and suspected as possibly being not as respectable and innocent as she might like to appear.

388 In washing, especially of clothes, a soapwort ("endod") (pircunia abyssinica) is gathered from wild bushes the location of which is carefully remembered, for they are not planted. The yellow fruit is dried and crushed, on a flat rock above the river or in it when the water is shallow. It is mixed with water, so that a greenish-white foam results. The fingermarks, resulting from the mixing and gathering of the foam, can be seen on rocks where the sun has dried the remnant.

[574] Dry grass is used as toilet paper, usually held in the left hand.

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302 Women fumigate their bodies frequently, in the dry season because water is short and hard to come by; in the rainy season, after bathing in the brook or river, to "get rid of the river odor". For, especially at the beginning of the rainy season, the rivers are muddy and carry much smelly debris.

There are 3 different, major kinds of fumigation wood ("yäṭis enc̣hät"): Domestic incense gathered in the woods by commoner women are "abalo" and "täjo" (Rhammus straddo); noblewomen and wealthy women aiming at prestige despise domestic woods, and insist on imported incense, primarily "eṭan" (frankincense), more expensive but freely purchasable on all markets because it is used regularly in the church, during services.

302 Plucking out of pubic hair, by means of ashes held between the fingers, was considered one of the most important duties of feminine hygiene. Men might shave, though not pluck, their pubic hair, if they desired to do so for special "cleanliness". This procedure of plucking

302 was required of females past puberty, i.e. women of marriage age, and they were not supposed to substitute the less efficient method of shaving. The proverb says;

[539]

"To a man who plucks out,
to a woman who shaves (pubic hair),
forgive He (God) will not."

However, in the recent change situation, possibly since the spread of the European razor blade, plucking is becoming a lost art among the younger generation; and, while women now shave their pubic hair; men let it grow naturally as most of them apparently have always done.

515 The continuous polishing of teeth ("mewachä") has already been mentioned. This is one of the few activities of body care in which even men indulge as continuously as women. The reason is that it is not regarded as "for cleanliness" (which is considered less necessary for men, in a culture which regards women as "dirty"), but as "polishing" and "sharpening" this equipment of nature for powerful use, much like birds whet their beaks, readying them for action. The polishing is done with a hardwood twig, the ends of which are masticated first, and and motion is upward and downward, so that the upper gums receive considerable massage also.

302 Nails are given little attention, except in the case of the bride, whose nails are trimmed usually a day before the wedding, so that she will not be able to scratch the bridegroom when he has to use force to deflower her. Her nails are cut so short that not infrequently the skin is cut, and hot butter is applied, to heal them and also render the fingers caressingly smooth.

Reddening of palms, fingers and soles of feet is feminine procedure in preparation for holy days and festivities. The most common cosmetic used for this purpose is called "ensosella" (Impatiens tinctore), a

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302 golden red stain obtained from the root of this bulbuous plant which grows wild. This is done by young girls and respectable married women, as well as "unattached women".

Shadowing of eyelids, however, is the specialty of divorcees and "unattached women". It is done by means of antimony ("kull"), mixed in powdered form with vegetable oil, and applied with a simple grass brush (much as in ancient Egypt).

304 Tattooing ("neqsat") is also a special attraction made use of almost exclusively by divorcees who want to attract another husband; [826] as they themselves say "for beauty's sake". Since it is a mark of beauty to have a long neck, tattooing aims at emphasizing this feature, and a concentric series of necklaces is carefully tattooed on the neck from ear to ear and from the collarbone until part of the way up the cheek. Seven hatched lines of this tattoo can cost as much as Eth$3-4, even in the less expensive provincial towns. The work is done by a professional woman tattooer, and takes several hours. There is pain for about a week thereafter, so that a divorcee usually has it done about two weeks before one of the major holy days in the year which also serve as climaxes of the flirting season, notably Epiphany (Ṭemqät) and Mikael. The freshly applied tattooing will then be noticed as an innovation by men looking over the eligible women, and as conversation piece invite the approach of the male. Tattooing fades, especially on dark skin.

Tattooing of the gums is also popular among divorcees, to heighten the whiteness of the teeth, and is curiously called "ṭers ṭequrat" (lit. blackening of the teeth), (also "guramaylē"). Unlike neck tattooing, in which the dye used is usually blue, blackening of the gums, between and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker effect.

000 and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker affect.

302 Women's coiffure is more elaborate and more regularly attended to than any other part of body care, not only by divorcees, but also by respectably married Amhara women; though the former have it done more often and more elaborately. The work is done by a woman beautician, whose biggest season is before religious holy days. The hair is braided front to back; and the finer the braid the more numerous the braids, the more prestigeful, and the more expensive. The thickest and cheapest braiding costs 25 ¢ Ethiopian, ("nätäla ṣhämo", lit. a half-done hairdo); a medium job costs 50 ¢ ("derb"); a fairly good job alternating one thick with one thin braid, called "serenq" costs 75 ¢; the thinnest, finest braids, "c̣echen", in which no fluffy hair is left between or above the braids, costs Eht $1.- (in Gondar), and takes several hours. Sometimes a slight variation of this hairdo leaves a horizontal, thin braid of hair across the upper forehead. The hair at the end of the braid, sticking out over the base of the skull, is left fluffy, ("jofjofē"), because the men like to caress the nape of the women's neck, and the hairdo carefully leaves this area free.

Butter boiled with the "ades" leaves is placed on the hairdo, and the smell of this is believed by the women to attract the men. When butter is put on unbraided hair, the hair is covered with a cloth. If [301] the hair is braided, a thick ribbon of cotton, sometimes dyed green by a divorcee who wants to advertise that she is available, is tied around the forehead, to catch the flow of butter when it melts in the heat of the day. This ribbon, ("gardaba", or "gälbē", or "mäläyo") formerly represented decorations given by their warlord commander to men who served as soldiers, but now women have taken it as their fashion, particularly the divorcees who can experiment more freely than wives, without being criticized. Well-to-do women or divorcees will have their braids undone every two months or so, so the hair can be washed, and then re-braided.

A woman who cannot afford even the minimal hairdo; or one who is in mourning; or one who is being possessed by a jealous "*zar*" spirit who has forbidden her to braid her hair the usual way may, on the occasion of an approaching holy day, have a single, horizontal, thick braid surround the head, called "zurosh".

Adolescent girls and poor unattached women, on the occasion of an approaching holy day, sometimes give themselves a simple hair innovation by shaving a circle in the center of the skull, leaving a ring of hair; or, as a compromise, shave the rear half of the skull, ("*sadulla*" or "*gamē*"). A partly braided skull is the frequent symbol of the adolescent girl, also of the bride; but if a married matron and mother of children were to resume it, she would be criticized for "light conduct" and suspected of immorality. However, *zar* doctors may order women clients to do this, as the expressed desire of a jealous zar spirit.

Little boys wear a coxcomb of hair (already described in section on the life cycle), called "*quṇcho*", resembling the Horus lock of ancient Egypt. Girl children wear, with or without the center lock, a ring of hair symbolic of their sexual differentiation.

Warrior males in the old tradition would wear their hair standing up as stiffly as possible ("*anchabarrara*"), often by means of grease, since this symbolized both ferociousness and disinterest in the finer arts of body care. This is still found in the Wolkait jungle area populated by hunters, and the refuge of bandits.

Beard comes somewhat late to men, usually not before the age of 25, so that a man waits till he is in the thirties and forties before

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "ṭirä aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Geez, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility: the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 150 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotälay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 [566] Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such [282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("degus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs impressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.

000 goatskin.

532 For it is in connection with the church institution that most of the limited Amhara decorative arts received their reason for tolerated existence and even encouragement. The most famous development of these arts are the Abyssinian Coptic churchpaintings. While writing and doodling and drawing is discouraged among the mass of church students because of the fear of misuse of black magic; skilled and supervised artists working within the framework of the church are freed from this suspicion by the sanctity of the church.

The skilled painter of church art, ("se'el sāli") may receive a commission for a specific painting from the priests or from a lay sponsor who may have himself or his deceased parents memorialized by ordering the artist to paint pictures of the sponsors into corners of the saint's painting, though in modestly smaller scale. Some artists have even painted themselves into a corner.

Most paintings are on canvas, in very vivid colors, and are affixed to the hard mud-and-wattle walls inside the church. Apprentices are drawn from upper students in church school, and first practice on silhouettes (footnote 100): Some of these incipient doodles can be seen on the whitewashed outer walls of some of the sturdier churches, e.g. at monasteries. They practice realistic drawings such as saints on horseback, daily life, games and animals, though their paintings will

[386] all be realistically portrayed religious scenes. Ink used is often made from the black fruit of the "tämbälal" tree (Jasminum floribundum), but dabtara scribes often use imported blue ink called "nil". A quill ("be'er") was traditionally used for writing and drawing.

Footnote 100 - Griaule, M.: Silhouettes et Graffiti Abyssins. Paris, 1933

532 The actual church paintings are in oils, and they are the most amazing products of Abyssinian art. They are highly formalized compositions, which is the chief concern of the artist, but accuracy of significant detail, expression and action, is also important. (To the foreigner the scenes and persons portrayed at first look naive and childlike.) Some scenes, if showing continuous developments of the story told, are arranged in strips like American comic strips, with the words spoken by the characters written in Amharic near the mouth of the speaker; names of sacred figures are written in Geez, so that no one can misread the story portrayed.

Among frequent subjects are scenes from the Bible, especially New Testament, portrayed realistically even to teardrops and drops of blood; and the lives of saints. Thus, the Abyssinian saint Takla Haymanot is shown one-legged, for he lost the other on a mission. Biblical characters are portrayed as light or light-brown of skin, and [776] God is shown as a long-bearded Mediterranean-or-European-Looking elder. Abyssinians are shown as brown in coloring, other Africans as black with peppercorn hair. One of the most frequent strips is the subject of the voyage of the Queen of Sheba to the court of Solomon, the conception of the prince Menelik I, and his miraculous return after reaching adulthood. This is semi-religious, but acceptable because of the "Solomonic Dynasty" acting as defender of the faith. By extension however, battle scenes showing Abyssinians defeating the Italian invaders in 1896, also "heathen" Shanqalla and Danakil, are occasionally seen and have become common for the tourist trade.

One of the noteworthy symbolisms in these oil paintings is the traditional portrayal of infidels, evil beings, demons, sinners, and torturers of Christian saints - in profile. By contrast, all good Christians are painted full-face. In profile, only one eye is shown, which may be one of the possible explanations - reduction of the power

532 of the evil eye. Another possible explanation is that centuries ago this symbolism was adopted from Armenian paintings; which is not surprising in view of early, though interrupted contacts between Byzantine and Coptic church art, and later on even Persian and Indian contacts (footnote 101). The amazing realism of natural objects may possibly be of ancient origin, and has survived the emphasis on highly formalized composition enforced by the church.

Scenes depicting everyday life ("aborē"), or the famous motif showing the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (mentioned in the Bible), are also painted on gourds, the useful utensil with the smooth surface. But only the well-to-do or noble families can afford this; (also the tourist). Sometimes the secular motifs show figures of famous military warlords and provincial dynastic heads of the past; and simple, incised geometric figures pleasing to the traditional feudal lord whose appreciation of art wanted direct, simple, and realistic portrayal.

4. Amhara Ideas about Nature and Mankind.

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812 While his material culture is limited, speculation about the structure, function, and most of all meaning, of the non-material world ranges unfettered in the Amhara culture pattern. Moreover, it is freely expressed, evidencing deep thought, but primarily a wonderment. Often there is a sensitivity that resembles Weltschmerz. This wondering out loud affects most Amhara men when they reach the "shemagalye" (elder) stage, and is one of the most frequently and intensely expressed subjects of their conversation; while at younger ages they are too

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Footnote 101 - Nollet, G.: Note (in) Aethiopica, Vol. 3 pp. 191-2
New York, 1935.

887 812 preoccupied with the immediate demands of life. The culture pattern encourages the shemagalye to give much time and effort to this wonderment, for it belongs to his prime role and social duty at this stage: the accumulation of wisdom. The church does not interfere with this wonderment and its expression, partly because it has not bothered to establish dogma on many subjects.

A. The Natural Universe.

821 [171] In many ways the Amhara concept of the universe resembles that of early medieval Europe, plus understandable similarities to the Middle East and Africa. Some conceptualizations are elaborations from the Biblical universe, readily recognizable because almost always the Geez language is used to express them. Other conceptualizations are animistic, and usually employ Cushitic terminology.

The universe is regarded as a Ptolemaic system, with the earth as the fixed center around which the sun turns. A distinction is made between the physical world, called simply "arät mazän" (lit. the 4 corners); and the world populated by all creatures, "aläm" (lit. world, in the Geez language). The persistence of this traditional view of a flat earth is so great that even Amhara schoolteachers in the modern elementary schools in the provinces, who are required to teach a spherical earth, privately admit that they don't believe it themselves!

Heavenly bodies and metereological phenomena are interpreted as directly related to human events. Venus is called "astärboshäsh" or "astäryo", (lit. the one who gives hunger and then flees), because the planet appears in the very brief dusk, when the heat of the day is over and one gets hungry. Because Venus is "fleeing and inconstant like a woman", she is given the feminine gender.

821 243 Considerable attention is given to the moon ("c̣häräqa"), for it is believed to cause the ripening of the grain after the sun has

821 caused the tender plant to sprout; therefore, cereal grains just
[243] beginning to sprout are called "chäräqwa". Full moon is a good time
[484] to travel, avoiding the heat of the day especially in the hot lowlands where travel in daytime is almost impossible; also it is safer since approaching or ambushing bandits can be more readily seen than earlier or later in the lunar cycle.

Dawn is personified, regarded as a young day being suckled ("täbba") by the warm and expansive sun, after chill of the night on the plateau.

787 However, the working out of astrological systems is left to the däbtära, who collects his knowledge from "secret" books (in Geez), more often actually from apprenticeship and extracurricular activities while in church school, and uses it in writing especially powerful and expensive amulets.

821 The various kinds of rain are almost as important to the Amhara as snows to the Eskimo and sands to the desert Arab. For the Amhara with his primitive plowing, has to wait until the right kind of light rain loosens the sunbaked soil; and his simple hut is little protection from the heavy rains. He therefore studies clouds and wind direction in relation to topography. The fine and penetrating rain ("zeg yalä zenab") permits the use of the common scratch-plow, and seeding. The heavy rainy season brings downpours, and is also accompanied by strong gusts of wind ("wächafo") and tornadoes. When the thunderstorm ends and a rainbow appears, it seems as if the earth had been reprieved, so that the rainbow is called "maryam mäqanät" (lit. the jealousy of Mary; i.e. her intercession, in the Geez language). However, when a rainbow occurs while it is still raining, the interpretation is more animistic, for it is regarded as an unnatural event, heralding the moment at which wild

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldaläch" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Gees, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesraq" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for wouthwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena,

829 animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

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576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen sänebätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large
825 numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the 825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the [755] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out loud in military unison ("yabahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs ("gamarē").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday" (when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.

829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

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Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia. Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65, pp. 361-4.

186 829 ethnocentrism: "We" includes the brunette racial features of the Mediterranean world, particularly if accompanied by Abyssinian-Coptic religion, for to the Amhara the name "Amhara" is synonymous with Christianity of their own denomination. "They", in their mind, refers to the black peoples of Africa whom they enslaved; but also to "infidel", particularly the Muslims with whom they have been at war so often. They draw many lines within these major ethnocentric divisions, racial, religious, ethnic-occupational and linguistic.. But, in the Amhara attitude, racial differences are among the most fundamental.

829 822 The skin color of most Amhara is regarded by them as brown ("ṭăym"), considered better looking than the black of negroid peoples, and reflecting "better character". Black color is regarded as symbolic of anything unpleasant, spiritually impure, ("ṭăqqoră" connotes "he became shadowed, sad, depressed"). It is a (mild) insult to call a very dark person "ṭăqqwara" (lit. "darkie"). European skin color is regarded as "red" ("qăy") - a common African attitude. The concept of "white" coloring connotes paleness ("năṭṭa" (lit. he became pale), undernourishment, sickness, insipid weakness.

822 291 Color symbolism is followed in dress: The Amhara wear white togas, without coloring more than the border, because the concept white also connotes spiritual purity (by extension of the concept of the absence of physical strength). Yellow ("wăyba") is the traditional color of special mourning, worn only by monastic monks who regard themselves as in a state of perpetual mourning for the passing of Christ from the earth (the dye is made from the bark of the "wayba" tree, hence the name). Green and blue are collectively called "arăngwadē", and are not sharply differentiated.

826 Racial ideas also dominate the Amhara concepts of physical

826 beauty: The comparative gerontomorphy of Amhara facial features, even in the case of females, is regarded by them as a mark of beauty, e.g. a long, high bridged nose, which denotes "nobility" and absence of strong negroid strains. In contrast, a flat nose with depressed root and broad nostril is called "*kurfäd*", which is also used as an insult. The thick lips of the negroid Shanqalla ex-slaves ("*känfäräm*", lit. full lower lip), especially if at the same time everted ("*aheya lämboch*" lit. donkey lip; or "*lämbocham*") are considered marks of ugliness in both men and women. The rare light eyes that crop up among the Amhara are not regarded as special marks of beauty, but as
[186] outlandish ("*bahēr ayn*", lit. eyes from overseas), for Amhara ethnocentrism is directed also at foreignisms other than negroid traits.
[171] The bulging almond eyes popular in other parts of the Middle East are regarded as marks of feminine beauty and feminine "nobility" by the Amhara also.

The spiral peppercorn hair ("*barya ṭägur*", lit. slave hair; or "kordada"), of the subjected negroid races is regarded as ugly by the Amhara. Conversely, their own helical hair ("*zoma ṭägur*", i.e. hair that stands up thick and rich in a bushy halo, or thick curls) is considered beautiful and indicative of "good racial stock ("*aṭṭentam*"). Outcrops of soft, wavy hair ("*läḥucha*", light hair that falls down), which is more frequent than light eyes, is regarded as outlandish, but accepted with a smile, as of no great significance.

Similar attitude rules the beauty of the ear. The medium-sized ear of most Amhara is preferred. The round, curved, small negroid ear ("*coraf joro*") is considered ugly; but the other extreme, the big elongated ear that stands out like a donkey's ("*cärbaba joro*"), found

826 in many Europeans, is not considered a mark of beauty either.

186 Amhara ethnocentrism rules over their attitudes to the other two
828 major ethnic groups that inhabit Abyssinia: The Coptic Tigrē peoples who are accepted as "ethnic cousins"; and the Muslim and "pagan" Galla, somewhat more African but not negroid, who occupy a middle social position above that of the Shanqalla. The Amhara stereotype as to the personality of these different groups is:

Amhara - "noble", slow of speech, subtle, patient, slow to anger.
Tigrē - shrewd, fast in thought and action, "light" in temper, impatient.
Galla - coarse, shameless (e.g. willing to do manual labor), dull-witted.

An interesting application of this stereotype has arisen in recent years in the discussions about these "national temperaments" by Amhara officers of the modern Ethiopian army, who are concerned with the performance to be expected of the diverse ethnics in battle; important considerations in a country where emotional differences along tribal lines are still strong:

Amhara soldier:

- Proud of individual feats; good fighter when his individual pride has been challenged and aroused.
- Hates to take orders; difficult to discipline.
- Loves to give orders, to act as "great man"; objects to being hurried.
- Explosive in temperament, when startled.
- Rarely tenaciously energetic; but if he possesses this quality, he is excellent potential leadership material.
- "If you treat him as a friend, he thinks he can be your master."

Galla soldier:

- Easy to discipline; will take orders and carry them out, without tricks.

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828 Pride in group, military unit; less emphasis on individual heroism.

Steadier temperament; endurance rather than burst of energy.

"If you treat him as a friend, he will serve you faithfully."

186
779 The religious ethnocentrism of the Amhara is based on their belief that their nation, ruled by the "Solomonic Dynasty", became heir to the "Chosen People" ruled by the House of David, when the latter refused to accept Christ. This is not always clear to the illiterate Amhara, but even he emphasizes this intertwined ethnic and religious principle of his ethnocentrism when he regards the name "Amhara" as signifying both, as he always does.

[304] While the Amhara no longer regards circumcision ("gezrät") as the symbol of entering the Covenant of the Faith, as does the Old Testament and the Jewish religion, he does follow this procedure a week after birth; and an uncircumcised man ("lembuṭ") is called several insulting names and regarded as almost on a level with African Shanqalla slaves who are also uncircumcised. Circumcision therefore has an intertwined ethnic and religious significance.

671 Amhara legal philosophy, guarded by the church, and expressed therefore in the Geez terminology, analyses the universe as follows:

Natural Law - "ṭäbayawi heg"

Man-made Law - (similar to common law) - "sähawi heg"

Moral Law (particularly Coptic law) - "yäbaherya heg" (lit. Law from overseas).

186 Ethnocentrism of the Amhara has for several centuries been consciously directed particularly against the attacking Muslims. The "mätäb" neckcord is believed directly the result of one such purposeful development. Numerous proverbs emphasize the stereotype of the Muslim as the breaker of Amhara religious order as well as social order, and the promoter of lawlessness. Even proverbs such as the following, -

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("*fit sälkakka*") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("*fit mēda*") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic. [304] A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred to in the following proverb:

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

826 Projecting teeth, especially incisors ("gäṭaṭa") are considered ugly, wild animal-like, and it is an insult to call such a person [302] "ṭersam" (lit. toothy). Hair is grown long and standing up stiff by warriors who wish to appear ferocious. The hairdoes of women are diverse. Baldness ("tämälläṭä") is relatively rare, and if at all, comes very late. Big hips, though covered, are considered an important mark of beauty in a woman, while little attention is paid to the breasts which lose their youthful shape early in life due to prolonged breastfeeding. The ideal feminine body is a fairly short, hippy woman ("täfär wägäb") with high-bridged nose and bulging eyes. On the other hand, a woman with small or lean hips, called "dog hips" ("wesha wägäb"), whose hips are sharply outlined ("wägäb araqi"), is considered deficient in feminine allure. The proverb says:

[539] "(strong) child from hippy woman;
(good) grain from lower terrain (more fertile)."

"A short man is like a monkey,
(but) a short woman like a noblewoman."

The seat of strength in a man is not considered to be in the biceps, but is believed located in the knee ("gulet"). This is examined when hiring a laborer (formerly also in a soldier), perhaps because the physical type of most Amhara is slender, and their legs have little visible musculature - though much endurance. It is still considered praise to call a young man "gulnasa" (powerfully kneed), and the Amhara take great pride in being able to walk long distances without a rest; flexing the tendon behind the knee ("gwanja"). The elbow is the next place ("kendam" man with powerful elbow) of strength. Bowlegs ("waraha") are considered the result of riding too much, and are not regarded as a special mark of ugliness.

826 A very thin person ("jemmatam") is regarded as being full of tendons, nerves and veins, all of which are generically called "jemmat"; they are conceived as running through the body like the fibers of a tree.

The beard comes late, and since a good chin whisker is rare before the age of 30, it is regarded as a sign of maturity. The proverb says:

[539] "Beard, lacking to the teacher;
cypress, lacking to the church; (i.e. symbol of the
churchyard) (are one)." (i.e. neither will
be fully respected.)

[779] The dichotomy of the human body, in the religion, considers the upper part holy; and the lower part, which serves sex and defecation, as profane. To illustrate one who serves two masters, the proverb says:

[539] "Above the hips - the tabot (sacred tablet of the church),
below the hips - idols."

No distinction is made in body hair, whether it is usually scanty underarm hair ("c̣heggum") or pubic hair, except that the latter was supposed to be plucked out by women. Despite the distinction of sacred and profane body parts, this distinction does not apply to archangels and saints, every part of whose body is lauded in some of the liturgy, e.g. in the book "Malek Mikael" which eulogizes also the body of this archangel.

Abnormalities of the human body are attributed to the effect of the supernatural. In the case of a new-born child, abnormality of body is attributed to an evil spirit, especially a male "zar" who has magically possessed the mother and who is jealous of the human husband whom he regards as his rival. In case of transvestites, who are always believed to be hermaphrodites ("fenāfel"), the abnormality is actually referred to as a "mistake of God".

827 Seven senses are distinguished by the Amhara, each centered in an organ:

1. Seeing - "ayn" (lit. eye)
2. Hearing - "jor" (ear)
3. Smelling - "afenc̣ha" (nose)
4. Tasting - "af" (mouth)
5. Feeling - "ej" (hand)
6. Walking - "erer" (leg, foot)
7. Sex sense - "abalä zär" (lit. male genital organs; polite term).

[151] The sense of taste is noteworthy because the Amhara often does not distinguish bitter ("märara") from sour taste ("homṭaṭa"), which the Westerner does quite readily; the Amhara regards both as "märara" (bitter). However, the Amhara distinguishes a "soft taste" ("ṭefeṭ"), typified by "berz" (honeywater).

828 While these seven senses are located physiologically in corresponding organs, psychological states are regarded as located in the belly or the heart, but in different ways than the Westerner might expect.

The belly ("hod") is considered the seat of emotions:

magnanimous emotions - "hod chäräc̣a" (lit. belly lit up like the moon);

fear - "hod babba" (lit. trembling of the belly);

forgetfulness - "hod säbba" (lit. the belly swallowed it, i.e. the thought).

The heart ("leb") is considered the seat of the presence or absence of wisdom:

good judgement - "leb ber" (lit. with a silver heart);

inventive - "leb wäläd" (lit. child of the heart; invention);

inactive - "leb mut" (lit. whose heart is dead);

828 imbecility - "leb defen" (lit. whose heart is stopped up).

828 201 Certain emotions are expressed by certain patterned physiological signals, often unconsciously:

Anger may be expressed unconsciously by biting the lower lip, or one's finger. Also by knitting the brow ("fir kosättälä"), from the painful expression that results from drinking the purgative drug kosso, so that a person who perpetually goes about with a frown is said to have a face "as if he had eaten kosso", a "kosso face" ("kosso fit"). Melancholy is expressed in a wrinkled facial expression ("fit chändadda").

The symbolic significance of the eye has been referred to in a number of connections. Timidity, and respect in the young, is expressed by "turning the eyes to the dust" ("ayn afar"). Impatience, by shifting the glance rapidly ("gärämmäṭa"), without making impatient body movements which would be "lower class". Directional signals may be consciously given ("ayn ataq̣qäsä") by eye movements already described; and observation out of the corner of one's eye ("ayn tägärammäta") is [754] a finely developed Amhara subtlety. The sorcerer's eye ("yäsäw ayn" lit. "the man's eye," to avoid the sinister name of the "buda" evil spirit) is greatly feared; particularly when it stares and seems to pop ("ayn tägolaggälä").

The "left" position is considered the embarassing side ("gera agäbba") (perhaps because the right side is always the honorable, or because it would be embarrassing to place someone so that he would have to take food with the left hand which is used in the toilet). Left-handedness is extremely rare. When some undertaking turns out badly, the saying is "The matter has turned left" ("nägär gera honä").

827 Physiological functions carried out without repression are considered low-class and low-ethnic by the Amhara. Only a low-class

827 person would use direct terms relating to certain body-functions: "ar" (fecal matter), "shänna" (he urinated), etc. Polite circumscription is well developed. But the actual carrying out of basic body functions is merely channelled, not repressed, even in "polite society". Farting, e.g., which is almost inevitable after consuming the daily "qolo" (roast peas or barley), is channelled as expressed in the following proberb:

> [539] "The Abyssinian is clever;
> bowing low (before the great man), he (silently) farts".

Spitting is the inevitable result of masticating the end of the twig used as a toothbrush; but it is not nearly as voluminous as the low-class spitting ("tiq alä", or "entef alä", both alliterations) of the Sudanese ex-slaves (Barya) and Muslim Abyssinians who hold a wad of tobacco between lower lip and gum, chew, and spit.

828 157 In the conceptualization of human personalities, the Amhara take subject matter also from physiological functions and from the ethnic and other divisions of the class structure:

The Rustic (esp. peasant):

"balagär" (lit. man of the rural country), also "bälägē". Unpolished, impolite, vulgar.

"wetter" - ignorant person who asks embarassing questions to "inflate his own belly".

The Simple-minded: "yäwah" - simple, good, modest, honest, frank, sincere.

"wedeqät" - (lit. young bull) - simpleton, who causes damage without meaning to; e.g. who cannot hold his tongue.

The Fool: "donqworo" (lit. deaf; deaf-mute) Stupid person whose mind nothing seems to penetrate.

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"ṭärzazza" - proud person, e.g. who does not reply though called twice.

"afä adaṭär" (who let slip from the mouth) what he didn't mean to reveal. Also "sat alä" (let slip) like ax, when working.

The Immature Personality: "gābrē hasaṛat" (lit. Slave of the nursling stage).

The Effeminate Male: "qāṛtalla" - a delicate man, who cannot argue aggressively even if there is good reason for it.

"bukkän" - a fat, short male, who cannot walk long distances or march into battle; hence, a coward.

The Insane: "enäf" - idiot, (also insult for a fool).

"wäfäftänä" - violently insane person (insult for a quarrelsome person).

"wedegät" - epileptic, who falls down.

"ebd" - person who runs amok (believed possessed by "ganyēn" evil spirit).

The Clever Person: "balä ej" - who is skillful with his hands, e.g. a surgeon ("wogasha").

"däleddel säw" - poised person, who can face and solve some direct, physical problem.

"ṭebäb" or "ṭäbib" - skilled craftsman, trained artisan (includes the respectable dabtara scribe as well as ethnic smiths and sorcerers).

The Wise Person: "Balä meker" - Man of counsel, prudent, judicious.

"Awaqi" (lit. knower) - one who has accumulated knowledge with or without books.

"c̣hemmet" - calm, softspoken, modest, tranquil, sedate, serious.

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157 "qäleb" - one who shines with intelligence;

"qälbam" - Person full of reason, discretion, intellectual beauty.

812 It is clear from the last two personalities that a distinction is made between the merely clever (e.g. in material things) and the wise person. Wisdom is stressed in numerous proverbs:

[539] "A king who has no wise councillor,
not one year will he reign".

Many Amhara desirous of reputation, emulate the Biblical wisdom of King Solomon, a wise judge whom "no one could fool". Anecdotes of this type of wisdom are told far and wide, of kings and of rulers of provinces. Even at present, some of these anecdotes are told of rulers still living, including of Emperor Haile Selassie. The following two anecdotes, which may well be factual, are told in Gondar about Ras Imru, who ruled as governor-general of Begemdir province just after the liberation from Italian occupation, when banditry was a major problem:

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812 1. Two bandits accused of robbery-murder were placed in separate confinement. They had refused to confess, and the time of the murder could not be ascertained. One bandit was taken to the place of the crime, on orders of Ras Imru, and told that his partner had confessed; then, that the time of the crime had been such-and-such. Eager to argue against such an error, the bandit momentarily overlooked the fact that by correcting the time element he was giving himself away. Whereupon both were convicted and hanged.

2. One day, while riding through the market, Ras Imru was halted when a woman threw herself before his horse, shouting "abyet", the traditional appeal of the oppressed. She accused one of Ras Imru's soldiers of having consumed a large pitcher of milk she had for sale, without payment. The soldier denied it, and there were no witnesses

812 willing to testify against him. Ras Imru ordered that he be made to [539] vomit, and on the basis of this evidence convicted him on the spot.

While the clever arguer in court, who is acclaimed, may be merely "clever", the truly wise man is conceived as one whose words are few but weighty:

[539] "Man, by what can he be valued?
by his speech can he be valued".

Hence, in the games of growing children, the hazing pattern is gradually replaced by verbal contests, and the winner or "better man" is not necessarily the physically stronger but he who can out-insult and out-argue the other.

However, individualistic non-conformity in ordinary persons is criticized, and regarded as rendering such persons shiftless, unstable and impermanent.

Finally, different regions of Amhara-populated areas are believed to be specialized in specific types of personalities; e.g. the däbtära scribes of Enṭoṭo, where the capital of Addis Ababa is located now, have long had the reputation of special cleverness, speaking in riddles which make understanding painful, when they deign to converse at all with ordinary Amhara commoners:

[539] "The wise men of Enṭoṭo,
talk just once a year,
(and then) always (bitingly) bitter".

[776] Special skill of hand or mind is generally believed, for good or ill, to come from the world and functions of the spirits.

PART VI: HEALING BODY AND SPIRIT

753 177 The "living museum" aspect of Abyssinian culture is perhaps nowhere so evident as in Abyssinian medicine. Both basic concepts and practical functions recall much that has been derived with little change (though much culture loss) from ancient Egypt, the ancient Near East, ancient Greek culture, plus regional ecological developments in Abyssinia itself.

753 756 Many ailments are regarded by the Amhara as closely interwoven in the body and spirit of the patient, and in fact, frequently no sharp distinction is made between bodily and spiritual ailments; so that the same illness may sometimes be treated by the surgeon-herbologist ("woggesha"), and if not successfully cured, by the practitioner of exorcising magic, the "däbtära" scribe; or the practitioner of sympathetic magic, of the "zar" cult; or even the sorcerer, the "tänqway". Only the latter is considered illegal. However, a fairly clear distinction is made between organic ailments and functional ailments, and on the basis of whichever preliminary diagnosis is made, it is decided which practitioner to call in first.

756 The association of the däbtära with the church has increased his activities in recent years from that of amulet-writer and herbologist to many of the functions of outright magic, particularly since the tanqway has become illegal. The dabtara always seems to have enjoyed the highest respectability and trust of any of the practitioners, for, as in ancient Greece, his activity in the official religion is believed to extend over the ills of the body and over the world of the spirits. 753 There is no philosophical basis for the development of medical systems among the Amhara, no reasoned system. Their medical concepts are pre-Galen, at most Aristotelian. The dabtara have, or, in some cases claim

756 to have, books handed down from past centuries, containing secret formulae, recipes, pharmacopeia of an intermingled empirical and magical nature. They warn inquirers that the public revelation of th these secrets would create great social dangers at the hands of the irresponsible.

171 In the days of ancient Egypt, Abyssinia was a supplier of materials for embalming, such as incense, myrrh, etc. It is therefore little wonder that much of Abyssinian medicine resembles that of ancient Egypt, e.g. the strong emphasis on purgatives used regularly.

753 The Amhara shares with peasants in many other parts of the world his belief in "strong" medicine, powerful in taste or heroic in effect or both. Since the Italian invasion, his belief in injections, which bring such miraculously quick results, has assumed magical proportions. Generally he distrusts and fears new medicines.

1. Healing the Body

A. The Surgeon-Herbologist-Empiricist ("woggesha"): Utilizing Nature.

759 Unlike the other medical practioners mentioned earlier, the woggesha does not try to dominate nature; he specializes in utilizing what nature provides and in lending a helping hand. He is most often the first consulted, a kind of general practitioner, family doctor; and since he refrains from magical undertakings, he is neither feared nor suspected of witchcraft, which the other practioners, even the dabtara, often are.

Like the dabtara, the woggesha is often an expert herbologist, called "agabi seray" (lit. who knows the work of nature). While walking in the bush, along brooks in the valley or in the "dega"

759 upland, he notices and remembers the location of plants and roots, which supply him with much of his pharmacopeia. His sense of direction is trained and therefore seems uncanny to the layman. Moreover, not infrequently he actually transplants certain wild plants, so that he can always find them; sufficiently far from residential habitations so that they are not easily found or consumed by cattle or playful [825 824] boys. A good rule for distance is how far the crowing of a rooster can be heard - for some plants are believed to lose their magical power if disturbed by this sound.

The "woggesha" usually learns his craft from his father, while serving him as apprentice. But at present the most popular "woggesha" in the town of Gondar is a well-known former bandit, who has gained an enviable reputation as a skilled surgeon. The "woggesha" is usually a diplomat in his human relations, much like the old-time Western family doctor. He usually tries to remain on good terms with the local church, and often invites the local dabtara to dinner at his house, especially on saints' days, to avoid their competitive hostility and to discuss some cases on a "professional" level.

In his capacity as surgeon, the "woggesha" sets fractures, cuts [757] abscesses, pulls teeth (now with European pliers). But some of his practices are severely condemned by European doctors who object particularly to the woggesha's frequent ripping out of part of the soft palate to cure tonsilitis and chronic sore throat, often causing blood poisoning. Nevertheless, the present government still permits the woggesha to function "in his own district", for otherwise most people would be left without any medical empiricist.

757 The pulse is of no interest to the woggesha (unlike ancient medicine in Asia). He relies as heavily on violent purgatives as the ancient Egyptians, and on cauterization (much in the ancient Hippocratic tradition).

The enema, widespread in Asia, is not used. But the intestinal [278] purgatives against tapeworm, especially the famous "kosso" (Quassia abyssinica), have been developed to complex sequences in medical cure. Butter is used as an ointment and mild laxative, sometimes boiled with specific herbs.

The instruments used by the "woggesha" are very simple: a sharp knife, simple forceps or pliers, wire for ripping (e.g. the soft palate), the horn of a cow or antelope or zebra (called "wagämt") for cupping ("aggärä"). The latter procedure is not used often, it is tried primarily to cure a chronic headache, by shaving an area on the rear of the skull, making a small incision, and drawing the blood by means of the horn. Artificial nosebleeds are also occasionally produced ("gärässärä"). But drawing blood is done in great secrecy, for the patient is ashamed to have it become known that his "blood is bad". Instead of applying leeches, some patients are taken to a waterhole or lowland lake known to contain leeches, where they expose the sick part of the body in the water, waiting for the leeches to fasten themselves.

752 Some "woggesha" have a great reputation for having saved patiehts bitten by snakes. The fact is that most Amhara, living on the highland plateau, rarely encounter a really poisonous snake, and suffer most often from the harmless (though painful) bite of the "talba" snake. The patient would recover anyway in due course.

000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convalescense ("gäggäm alä") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 756 757 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha"; women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach the "dabtara" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("fäwash"), "balä mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogzit"), modern "dresser" ("astamami"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 757 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

178 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know
757 of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside
the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last
resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment
by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces
[743] the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in
all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are
heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha"
has not shrunk at all.

164 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

757 The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha"
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755 and "däbtära", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties
but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

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I: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Table II: Bodily Ailments, Symptoms, Practitioners, Diagnoses, Treatment.

Ailment	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Diagnosis or Symptoms	Treatment
snakebite	"obab"(snake) "gwämit", very poisonous but rare; "täwarwari obab", lowland cave snake (also "asil"), very poisonous, but rare on plateau. "talba obab" brownish flax-snake, common, not poisonous, but believed to be. "zändo" (large python), not poisonous, infrequently encountered.	woggesha däbtära: prevents snakebite by writing amulet "Abuna Batra Maryam", and wrapping it in "tä'ätla" (mistletoe) leaves that keep snakes away. In presence of snake, lets shadow fall on it to immobilize it, saying: "He is born of virgin, without conception by a father, a and He has saved us; but it, that has misled Eve, the snake..."(which scares the snake away).	fang marks	cuts wound with razor (arab melach), also may cut flesh away. No sucking of blood for fear of poison. Stop bleeding with "let" leaves. Smears oily "nug" - cake on, for healing.
tonsilitis, chronic sore throat	"angar", or "enṭel" (lit. uvula)	woggesha	pain in throat, regarded as "sick uvula"	rips out part of soft palate with wire.
toothache	"lemam yazä" (lit. the rot has seized it).	woggesha	toothache	"kills the demon that bites" by inserting a caustic medicine that eats into the gum; (actually a counter-irritant).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
Ear infection	"qenqen" or "qetqet"	woggesha	diagnosed as "buzzing insect that got into patient's ear".	"kills insect in ear" by caustic drops; (actually a counter-irritant)
cough (human) (donkey)		woggesha		drink expectorant made from aloes ("erä"). feed donkey roasted "qärcho", a yellow thistle weed that grows in plowed fields.
tuberculosis (esp. pulmonary). 30% incidence estimated by Italians.	"mäggäña" (Galla: "arwe karhamu)	däbtära	coughing blood, leaving patient limp. Diagnosed as "threshhold demon named 'mäggäña', who entered patient in early morning", or "red snake in belly".	Purgative, made of root of rhubarb "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), boiled in butter. Magic "sacrifice of threshhold" of chicken or goat, and fumigation of hut with "woggärt". Spraying of holy water. If all are dead, abandon the hut. (Also, cauterization with hot pin).
tapeworm (taenia saginata) Very common.	"wäsfat"	woggesha	noticed in stool; or, prophylactic after every "brundo" (raw beef) feast; or every 2 months.	Purgative (Vermifuge) made of "kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica, Quassia amara), prepared from the dry flowers, bark and twigs of this rosacious highland tree, while swallowing a dozen "enqoqo" seeds like pills. Produces a 3-day painful diarrhea.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bacterial dysentery. Very common.		woggesha	diarrhea	Only black tyeff grain may be eaten. If not cured, drink boiled leaves of "sărch embway" thistle (Solanum marginatum).
dysentery. Very common, esp. in market towns	"teqmaṭ" (lit. what makes to sit down)	woggesha	diarrhea with blood	Purgative made of hottest "bärbärē" pepper called "mitmitta" (Capsicum abyssinicum) with smallest pods, taken in the evening together with raw beef ("brundo") after a day of complete fasting; the next morning, drink purgative kosso with engogo pills.
intestinal disturbances colic	angorba	woggesha	pains, much salivation	drink tea of "teferendo" bush, or of "tembălal" (Jasminum floribundum); or of "amorra" root (used also in tatooing as astringent). In mild cases, chew leaf of "tenă adam" garden plant and swallow the juice.

(constipation, etc., is treated with mineral salt "ashal chäw," now with "English salt" (Epsom).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
heart ailment. occasionally.	"leb bäsheta" (lit. heart sickness)	woggesha	pains in heart region	antispasmotic drink made of honey of the wild bee "tazzema" (Apis Africans miaia).
conjunctivitis, trachoma, ophthalmia, eye diseases Very common.	"Nädära" or "Aynät" (female demons)	däbtära	eye inflammation, pain, incipient blindness	apply juice of "Ketketa" flower (Dodonea viscosa) by means of cotton cloth; then take vapor bath. Or use juice of aloes ("ret"). Rub wrinkled leaves of "käsyē" (resembles thyme). Wear amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of the demon.
headache, migraine, neuralgia. Very common.	"felṭät"	woggesha däbtära		Inhale fumes of burning leaves of "woggärt" plant or "gizäwa" bush(which resembles elderberry). Shave area in back of head, make small incision with horn, sucking the blood. On Mary's birthday, leave chickpeas or other food for the birds.
hemorrhoids. common.	"kentarot"	woggesha	pains, (mostly in adults)	Astringent shrinks piles; made of the juice of certain secret roots, applied daily for a week.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bleeding from wounds		woggesha		apply rolled and crumbled leaf of "lot" plant to wound, to stop bleeding. apply aloes ("rēt") to promote formation of scar tissue.
excessive menstrual bleeding	"yädam abennät"	woggesha däbtära	diagnosed as female demon "Werzelya"	Hang magic root under garment. Root bears name of illness, drives it away. Amulets.
miscarriage	"yädam ṭerät"	däbtära	demon Werzelya	Peel this root and wear it. Amulets
barronness Incidence as high as 25%	"yädam ṭefat"	däbtära	demon Werzelya, believed to have "stopped patient's menstruation."	Specially written amulet, referring to King Susneyos' formula, hung on the neckcord.
chigger, sandflea infection. Common, esp. in dry lowland.	"moyalē"	woggesha		Pick out whole organism with needle, without breaking it.
muscular dystrophy, & other paralytic diseases.	"gwaya ankätäkkätäw" (lit. the gwaya plant has broken him).		diagnosed as due to "having walked through a field of this plant", or "having spilled water in which it was boiled, on one's leg". Symptoms: cross legged, pigeontoed walk.	No certain cure. Sometimes treated like the "mech" disease (general functional ailment).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
paralysis	"ṣefat"	woggesha dăbtära	stroke, often fatal	No certain cure, Amulets.
struck by lightning	"mäbräq	woggesha dăbtära	found unconcious diagnosed as "struck by thunder".	Carried to fireplace, kept warm. If patient dies, regarded as heavenly punishment, for hidden crime.
visible syphilis (early stage). Incidence syphilis 50-80% estimated by Italians.	"qiṭĕn"	woggesha dăbtära	syphilitic sores	1st stage of treatment: Smear resin on sores, or "käbre" (sulphur). Intensive eating of bärbäre pepper (Capsicum abyssinicum) in order to salivate, for the disease is believed to come out with saliva; also the purgative kosso (as in cases of tapeworm), for same reason. (Magic): sacrifice male, black goat (to demon), drink its blood and eat it, for this omnivorous animal has eaten a variety of herbs that may help. Then purge 4 months. 2nd stage: Sweatcure at hot springs("filowa"), dedicated to a saint, for 40 days. Bqfrain from salt, drink much water. In some cases, drink sarsaparilla root (Sáilax mauritanica) - (possibly recent diffusion).

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
chronic syphilis (including "benign syphilis" resembling Arab "bejol"; neuroe syphilis extremely rare. Chronic and inherited syphilis believed common by physicians.	"verdē"	dãbtära woggesha		Prophylactic treatment obtained by some from dãbtära before exposure to syphilis is kept secret, Cures include crushing of "bessana" root with Kosso, ratio 1 : 2, which is dissolved in pure barley beer "talla gebs". This purgative is believed to bring out germ with diarrhea or vomiting.
gonorrhea (common - esp. in market towns)	"c̣häbeṭ" or "chebet" (lit. it squeezes me)	woggesha	believed caused from having urinated in sunshine. Symptom: pain and urinating with difficulty.	Same cure with "bessana" root purgative as in chronic syphilis.
smallpox other pox (occasional epidemics, now rarer)	"fänṭaṭa" "liṭē"	woggesha	believed caused by morning-threshhold demon "maggäña" (See tuberculosis)	Vesicant to "bring out the rash" by rubbing "käbrē" (sulphur) on sores, or, if unavailable, saffron. Patient must not touch water until healed. Neighbors wait until after 7A.M. to brink cakes of food, so that they will not encounter the morning demon "mäggäña" on threshhold.

Variolation with "kuffeñ" (mild pox or chicken pox, or taken from pus of sick person) especially in epidemics; sores are rubbed with honey.

Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
abscess or running sore	"quṇcher"	woggesha	believed caused by urine of certain moth.	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur or resin. Ointment made from leaves of "enqoqo" bush used as anti scabies. Purgatives made from "bessana" leaves or from juice of euphorbia candelabra ("golqwal"), drunk in fresh barley beer.
impetigo	"chefē"	woggesha	believed caused by washing in "bad water"	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.
white sore on hand; itch.	"lekäft"	woggesha	believed caused by having left water uncovered over-night, and washing hand in it the next morning. Pain, tendons affected. Believed non-contageous.	apply astringent leaf-compresses, e.g. from the "därch embway" flower with the little red fruit; or of the "embway" (yellow thistle).
other sore on hand	"chäfē"	woggesha	believed contageous form of "lekaft"; much feared.	Cover sore with nug oil paste, and salt, to keep it from spreading.
scrofula	"näqärsa"	woggesha	symptoms on neck	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
leprosy (occasionally).	"lefē", "qomaṭa", "lämṣ"	woggesha	discoloration of skin, loss of nails, etc.	Combination of treatment of other sores. (Now treated by WHO with injection of sulphetrone, etc.).
scarlet fever (rare)	"lash"	woggesha däbtära	Peeling skin, sometimes falling hair, in children. Believed caused by female demon that specializes in hurting children.	"bring out rash" by applying sulphur to the itchy skin. Dabtara provides prophylactic as well as curative amulet against this demon.
typhus fever; If epidemic: (common in highlands)	"tälalafi bäsheta", "yänäfs bäsheta" "tässebo"	däbtära	Believed caused by certain demons.	Amulets. (Now free injections and immunization by government "dressers" at town markets).
relapsing fever (Fatality higher than typhus; louse-born in highland, tick-born in lowland).	"mech" or "mechdär"	däbtära woggasha	Patient believed struck by the demon of "hot fog", ("mech gättaw"). Same term used for sunstroke, and pneumonia. Symptoms include headaches, vomiting, violent fever, soon fatal. Illness believed brought on by sunstroke or eating spicy foods or green corn without washing mouth.	Febrifuge prepared from roasted "halgäb" plant (which resembles mint), collected with great secrecy in the bush. "Mech mädhānit" (lit. Mech medicine) also uses other plants, the leaves of which are squeezed, and the juice is drunk, sniffed, and rubbed over body, with formulas being pronounced (magic)

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
malaria (common below 5000 ft. endemic below 3000 ft; epidemics in lowland market towns.	"nedad" (lit. burn) "tekwosat" (fever, generic) "woba" (boil)	woggesha	fever	Patient drinks febrifuge made from min-like herbs boiled in butter. Band with cold water placed on head.
rheumatism (common)	"qorṭemat"	däbtära	believed caused by "buda" evil spirit	Drive evil spirit away with disagreeable odor of "cheqquñ" plant stuffed in nose.
		zar doctor	if believed due to possession by "lasy zar"	Bribe the "adbar"outdoor zar spirit or the "qolē" zar with sacrifice of food.
arthritis or deforming rheumatism	"rih"	priest		Rebaptize patient at holy well ("täbäl"); or advise him to go to a hot mineral spring dedicated to a saint ("filowa") for sweat cure.
rickets	"ṭela"	däbtära	swelling of bony joints; believed caused by demon of evil eye.	Amulet.
yellow jaundice	"wof zorräbbat" (lit. the bird turned directions over him	däbtära	skin discoloration, thick urin.	Amulet.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
puerperal fever	"tekwesat" (generic, fever)	däbtära	believed caused by female, jealous, demon "Karina".	Amulet reciting victory of Solomon over Karina.
delirium	"buda" (evil spirit)	däbtära	believed due to "buda" possession.	Intoxicant drug "astänager" Thornapple Jimsonwee (Datura stramonium) (lit. that which makes to talk) is drunk by patient so that he reveals the name of the specific evil spirit; then it can be exorcised.
epilepsy	"yäbarya bäsheta" "yabuda basheta" (evil spirit disease)	däbtära	spasms, convulsions.	Same treatment as in delirium and rheumatism, or both.
	(haut gal) "ganyēn yazä (lit. the djinn have seized him) "ebd" (have enslaved him)		running amok, violent	Cast out "ganyēn" by spells and exorcism. Or eat intoxicant paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha) root. Exorcism of "buda" or "ganyen".
(St. Vitus)	"nägärgar", or naqaṭqaṭ"			

Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
hysteria	"zar" (spirit, benign or evil)	zar doctor	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult); Stimulant "asē faris" (stramoine datura) (lit. wood of Persia) is often preliminary treatment. The effect is agitated somnambulism, enabling patient to see the future, and the (evil) spirits that have attached themselves to him; esp. the "aynä tela" (lit. shadow eye), usually in shape of a woman, who spoils well-laid plans. Once her name is revealed, däbtära throws cold water on patient to reawaken.
chronic apathy (catalepsy)	"T̄egerteya" (female demon)	zar doctor däbtära	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult) and "buda"
insanity	"Waddegeni" (female demon)	zar doctor	(see zar cult)	(see zar cult)
amok			(see "ganyen")	

753 An important part of diagnosis is the decision whether an ailment is contagious ("fera") or not, and whether it is inherited, congenital ("qurañña") or not. If inherited, marriages with such families are despised as not "aṭṭenṭam" (good stock), the same term used for descent from slaves or other "race" or both.

759 In general, the woggesha is most often called in organic ailments;
757 shares with the "dabtara" the practice of functional ailments; while the latter shares with the "zar" doctor the treatment of mental ailments.

2. Healing the Spirit

x794 A. The "Zar" cult of supernatural spirits, its institution and cosmology.

755 One of the most complex developments of Amhara non-material culture, to which a great deal of mental ingenuity is devoted, is the healing of mental ailments. But this goes far beyond treatment and cure. The "zar" doctors do not limit themselves to treating some of the aforementioned mental ailments. They organize the afflicted, before, during and after "cure", into "zar" societies, which bear the earmarks of a religious cult, and to which the individual belongs henceforth until his or her (more often her) death. Here he finds the warm companionship of the fellow-afflicted; opportunity for expressive behavior; the religious feeling of having been of service; the personal attention of a personal possessive and protective spirit; and the visible leadership of the "zar" doctor who heads the organizational unit.

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756 The zar doctor often a matriarch, differs only in degree from her flock; for she, too, must be possessed, must be forever afflicted by spirits. But she has managed to learn to control them, call upon her more powerful protective spirits to aid her against evil spirits,

x794 756 more tricky but less powerful than hers. This enables her to relieve the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of like and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

x794 562 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara, particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "*zecābi*" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

x794 755 [832] The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

x794 755 In the zar cult, there is no attempt to win the love of the spirit, or to love him or her in turn; rather it is a game of cajoling, tricking, bribing the patient out of the condition of total submission into one of partial control; and then forever renting one's mortgaged mental health through permanent financial payments. But there is the added recompense of gaining an invisible protector, who, as financial partner, has a permanent interest in the success of the partnership; plus the recompense of the human fellowship.

x794 773 776 According to the mythology of the "zar"cult, the "zar" spirits originated in the Biblical Garden of Eden at the same time man was created. They assumed physical form when Eve began to bear children. Eve is believed to have had 30 children. One day, when God the Creator came to visit, and began to count the children, Eve (evidently fearing the evil eye), hid the 15 most beautiful ones. God, being all-knowing, realized this, and became angry. As punishment, He decreed that the 15 hidden children always remain hidden, invisible, night creatures, for all eternity. The present-day zar spirits are believed descended from them. The "zar" spirits are more powerful and more beautiful than man, know remedies for all ailments, but envy their uglier and weaker human brothers and sisters who are "daytime" children of the light. Some "zar" spirits have thus become malevolent, though many can be cajoled and bribed into "forgiveness" (a word much used in the cult ceremony). Others are inclined to be benevolent, and, if their pity is touched, may reveal secret remedies, in dreams or during possession, e.g. to a mother for her sick child.

x 794 776 753 There are male "zars" and female ones. The latter are considered more dangerous and more difficult to placate. Usually a "zar" spirit prefers to "possess" a human of the opposite sex, which results in a magical coitus, and cuases epilectic seizures or catatonic states. In the latter case, usually a woman being "slept with" by a jealous make "zar", she seems drowsy and "turned within herself", disinterested in the environment, forgetting to eat. In the former case, the magical coitus sends her into orgasms of twisted arms and legs; or sometimes, twirling frenziedly; sometimes moving on all fours, emitting raucous sounds, biting the unwary, while being "ridden like a horse" by the "zar".

x 794 776 823 The "zars" of today are regarded as having geographical homelands. In abyssinia their central location is believed to be in the province of Tigre, where they prefer woodland grottoes on the highland plateau, and where, if taken off guard under certain circumstances, they can become temporarily visible. Some zar doctors even narrow this central headquarters to a locality known as "Halawel" near the existing town of Makalle. On occasion the "zar" spirits there are believed to hold dances, even orgies. But most often they live in families, much like [825] human Abyssinians, though on a superhuman level. They can ride elephants, lions, etc, to whom they refer as "fărăsey" (lit. my horse), the same term they use to humans whom they "ride" during possession. But they despise the hyena, which is the "horse" of the evil "buda" spirit. The "cattle" of the zar spirits consists of wild gazelles, antelopes - the wild relatives of cattle domesticated by humans. Zar spirits are fond of peppery sauce ("woṭ") and "enjăra" bread much like Abyssinians. Tree stumps serve them as tables. They like the flowers and green

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[823] woods of the Abyssinian highlands very much, being of lowland desert origin themselves.

They can fly, dive, have hands that are strong as iron, and are wiser than humans. But their social institutions are not much better than man's. Their children must go to school to learn, just like human children. Their social hierachy is much like that of Abyssinia, with kings, chiefs, chamberlains, and a servant class. They have wars among themselves in which they can be killed by other, stronger and shrewder zars. Even their individual personalities may have serious shortcomings: generally a distinction is made between small-statured, evil, ignorant, very dark-skinned zars, and tall, noble, educated, light-skinned zars. The latter resemble their ancestors, while the others have degenerated. The zars are divided into ethnic groups and religions, so that there are Christian, Muslim, Falasha and pagan zars. They are curious about humans of other religions, e.g. a Christian zar may "possess" a human who is Muslim and make him act and dress like a Christian (and vice versa). Diseases, especially functional and mental ailments, emanate from the zars, but so do the remedies.

The superhuman attributes of the "zar" spirits are largely in achievements of material culture, in which the human Amhara is so little developed; in non-material aspects of culture, such as governing society, and in personality, no greatly superior level is visualized.

[164] No human being is considered entirely invulnerable to "zar" possession, not even foreigners. Moreover, "mild possessions" hit every human some time during a lifetime, though this may pass with relatively little notice.

×794 776 755 Every zar has an individual name and personality. Thus, one of the first tasks of the "zar doctor" is to diagnose. This is done in a variety of complex procedures: "Playing along" with the spirit's desires expressed through the mouth of the actions of the possessed; or, in case of intermittent possession, a cult session during which the "zar" is lured to re-possess and re-inhabit the body of the patient, in public, where the zar doctor can observe every phase of the sequence of possession, and thus, on the basis of long experience, detect the peculiarities of the particular "zar" spirits. Once identified, gradual and limited "control" of the particular spirit can then be established, and a "modus vivendi" created.

a) The "Zar" doctor; patients; procedures of healing; basic "zar" personalities.

×794 755 The work of the "zar" doctor consists of three parts: identifying the spirit who"rides" the patient "like a monkey" (the same metaphor used by drug addicts in Western countries, e.g. in the movie "Man with the Golden Arm"); after this diagnosis follows the "cultivation", negotiation, establishment of friendly relations with the spirit (treatment); finally the establishment of life-long protective cult relationships (prognosis; socio-mental hygiene).

×794 756 The boundary line between the chronic "zar" patient and the "zar" doctor is regarded as a thin one. Both are referred to as "bala zar" (lit. mastered by the zar). Both are equally "possessed", by one or several spirits, but the healer has turned his weakness into a profession, by learning more and more about the various spirits; the types of patients; how to achieve some control over the situation instead of being controlled by it or even destroyed by it. The doctor must have a talent for this work, and learn it through long apprenticeship, while serving an experienced "zar" doctor as monitor in the cult. In time, a "zar" doctor will identify his own personality more and more with the most powerful of the spirits that possess him, or the one that possesses him most habitually, and will even derive his professional name from that individual "zar", e.g. "balä qolē" (lit. possessed by the non-dancing household-protective "zar" named "qolē"; hence - Doctor Qolē).

Much as in other skilled occupations among the Amhara, the "zar" doctor is regarded as particularly capable if he has inherited his profession, preferably from his mother. After apprenticeship, the new doctor receives his power by contagion, i.e. from his mother or older zar doctor who place the hands on the head of the graduate. In many cases this enables the "monkey" to slide from the teacher to the "zar" graduate, especially if the teacher is the mother, so that the new doctor can start out with a protective spirit of high calibre. Zar doctors lacking this inheritance sometimes claim that they have derived their extraordinary powers from having been kidnapped by a zar in early childhood (which zar spirits are fond of doing for the pleasure that looking at a "visible" child is said to give them); and having retained the power and privilege of communicating with his erstwhile foster-parent even after his release. This claim is more often made by male zar doctors than by female ones, for the latter usually inherit the profession from their mothers.

A zar doctor, especially a male one, is regarded as particularly arrogant in personality. When walking on a trail, he walks in great strides. His hair stands up stiff like that of a warrior, or, if his x794 756 "zar" is a Muslim, is covered with a flaming-colored turban. Unlike other Amhara men, he wears an ear-ring, of bright metal, in one ear. He seems absent-minded, distracted inward-looking, greets no one. However, when greeted, he may reply with a tirade, in "zar" language. Sometimes he claims to have just returned from a magical voyage, e.g. to have just visited the home country of a visiting foreigner, so that he knows all about it.

x794 756 755 Male zar doctors often develop a sharp, staring or shrewd Mephistophelian look, so that their effect on a patient who generally fears the evil eye is almost hypnotic even when the doctor is not in a trance. As a result, even stubborn patients in the grip of a new hysteria stop their shrieking when startled by the appearance of such a figure in the hut. Without saying a word, the doctor grasps the upper arm of the patient (for male "zars" attack the shoulders first, squatting on the back of the patient like a baby on the mother's back). When the patient, usually a woman, has been sufficiently subdued by the stare, the doctor loosens his grip and lightly begins to caress the upper arm and shoulder. This shows that he is unafraid to make contact with the spirit and that the situation is well in hand.

x794 756 A male zar doctor had, in the recent past, a place of honor at the table of feudal chiefs who often consulted them - perhaps more because of the doctors' knowledge of humans and public opinion than because of their spirit world. Even today, the social status and income of a zar doctor in rural areas and provincial towns is high, and he can afford such expensive European attire and apparel as a folding umbrella, laced shoes, a ring of silver or gold, etc. He may break rules of politeness, even utter mild insults and commit familiarities without

X 794 756 repression and penalty, for no layman can know whether or not it is the spirit who speaks through the doctor in any given situation.

X 794 164 The most frequent types of mental afflictions which the "zar" doctor is called upon to treat are forms of hysteria (mostly in women), catatonic states (also mostly in women), and violent forms of possession including epileptic states (mostly in men). But he also treats some functional ailments, notably rheumatism, which is believed to have been caused by a "lazy zar" who wants his "horse" to stay in one place.

X 794 776 753 Though every person is considered a potential "horse" for a zar, certain personality types are considered particularly vulnerable to possession by evil zars: persons with sad, returing, melancholic natures; women who feel unloved and neglected by their husbands and thus offer little resistance to a male "zar lover"; persons who wish to escape, e.g. chronic drunkards.

X 794 753 758 Apathy, leading to catatonic states if not treated, indicates incipient possession by an evil zar. The patient, often a woman, withdraws into a corner, sits there huddled up, refuses to accept food. Until a zar doctor can be persuaded to come and take on the case, family and friends try to give the patient first aid. For, if she were to remain long in this state, it is believed that her "zar" could "ride" her to death. Therefore, relatives and neighbors come quickly, sing to the patient, entertain her, promise her whatever her heart desires, and generally try to create a merry atmosphere. Finally they try to lure the patient into watching them dance, and try to raise the patient playfully, so as to join them. The patient is never left alone until the doctor comes.

x794 164 753 Psychotic cases among women usually assume a domineering male personality, such as believing themselves to be the ruthless Emperor Theodore, or the bloody Ras Mikael of Tigre. The zar doctor, however, elicits the confession of a "zar", so that he can treat the case.

Hysteria is believed mostly due to possession by female zars, who are more mischievous, silly and irresponsible than evil. If such a female zar possesses a male patient, he will manifest characteristics 838 regarded as feminine, such as silly gaiety, and teasing behavior. If not "awakened" quickly, such a state may become chronic and gradually destroy his masculinity. More common is hysteria among women, in which case the possession manifests itself as reversion to infantile behavior: the patient talks babytalk, skips about like a young goat and shamelessly demands little gifts even from strangers and passers-by. The patient must be humored, given gifts or at least promises, for the zar, speaking through the patient, may say: "If you don't give me this, I will kill my horse" (the patient).

Violent forms of possession may manifest themselves by aggression directed against the patient himself, such as beating himself, hitting the head against the wall, eating dirt, trying to climb the wall, wanting to run out at night to roam with hyenas. In some cases, if accompanied by nosebleed, or "weeping blood", this is diagnosed as "buda" and becomes a case for the däbtära practitioner. In cases of running amok, with aggression directed against others, it may be diagnosed as "ganyēn" (djinn) and be treated either by the dabtara, zar doctor, or ṭänqway sorcerer.

x794 776 758 The most common form of possession, particularly in women, begins with a kind of incubation. The male zar possessing her is jealous of her human husband, wants her to obtain a divorce and join a zar society

X794 776 753 cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "mäqwädäsha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if [231] angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

X794 776 A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at [845] [841] night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess [832] beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("weqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

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753] Possession of a man by a female zar occurs less often but is much more difficult to treat. Magical coitus in this case may render him impotent with human females. In some cases it manifests itself in nocturnal emissions of semen (wet dreams). It is believed that if a zar doctor (or a male patient) is possessed by a female zar at a young enough age, prior to puberty (which is very rare), he will develop female secondary sex characteristics, such as incipient breasts; some even say menstruation. Only zar doctors feel they have sufficient control over the situation to invite female zars to possess them, for the value of a few protective female zars as revealers of occult secrets is great.

Female zars are regarded as "uneducated" and "undisciplined"; none of them are believed to have "studied in Jerusalem" where many wise male zars are believed to have gone to school. Many female zars therefore never can become protective spirits. At most they can be flattered by special chants, and bribed to remain inactive, i.e. seated on the back of the "horse". More female than male zars are downright evil.

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[843] This is especially true when a female zar possesses a human female. This is most often due to jealousy, and is so diagnosed if a woman suffers a series of miscarriages. For, while male zars are regarded as "striking the shoulder", female zars immediately" strike at the genitals".

One of the basic relationships with a zar spirit of the opposite sex, the "magical coitus", is solemnized by the zar doctor in a "marriage communion". The possessed is then referred to as "mushärra" (newlywed), and is attended by two "mizē" (best men, like in a human wedding) from among the circle of the society of the possessed, who ever thereafter are in attendance every time another possession occurs, x794 776 so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling (much as "mizē" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more [674] masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

x794 755 A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally x794 755 535 broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

x794 of Amhara dancing), while the performer is yet seated, and continues
755 while she rises. Head and shoulders move forward and backward, sometimes
535 in horizontal direction, sometimes rotating clockwise, sometimes
counterclockwise. Nearing the orgiastic climax, the possessed proceeds
to twirl like a top, faster and faster, until she drops in a heap.
Habitues can go on for 20 minutes, and be ready for another movement
an hour later.

While watching this over and over again, the patient may herself in
time be moved to do likewise, though at first clumsily. This is a good
sign, for it means that her zar has consented to dismount from his
"riding" position, and is beginning to "descend" into the possessed person
itself. The "gurri" is regarded as the "victory dance" of the zar, much
like a hunter who has wounded and felled his deer. There is a strong
element of struggle in the "gurri" dance, like the frantic death-
[831] throes of an animal about to surrender its individual existence. It
is also the climax of the magical coitus (much like the bride who is
"conquered" on her wedding night).

x794 The patient is now in a trancelike state, considered in communica-
755 tion and partly identified with the zar, but yet open to urgings by the
doctor. More incense is burned, close by, to make the new and as-yet
unidentified zar feel cozy and put him in a benevolent, cooperative
mood. Great care must be taken prior to the diagnosis. For this
reason no poetry is sung to him and no gift given as yet, for the wrong
king might insult him - he insists on his own, individual cult. When
the patient dances subsequent "gurri", the zar doctor becomes increasingly
certain whether the zar is male, or female, evil or mischievous,
"neglected" or offended.

x 794 755 535 The specific personality and identity of the zar is revealed later during the course of the diagnosis, when the zar, using the body of the patient, dances the "fukkara" dance. This is considered the equivalent of the "boasting dance" of the Amhara warrior on the eve of battle, which goes by the same name. Thus the zar reveals his "färäs sem" (war name; lit. horse name, i.e. knighthood name), much like an Amhara feudal knight. Since formal "boasting" is highly individualistic, this means that the zar has come out of hiding, like a warrior who emerges from ambush. The dance itself is just as individualistic and irregular, therefore called "dankira", and may include the brandishing of sticks (as if they were spears) or jumping up and down.

x 794 755 Once the patient has proceeded to such expressive behavior, the zar doctor claims that he "knows" the identity of the zar. The doctor now asks the zar a series of leading questions, and the patient usually does not fail to respond with the "truthful" answers. Finally the name of the zar is openly proclaimed. Certain zars are stubborn, hide their identity in various subterfuges, so that the battle of wits between the zar doctor and the zar is a lengthy and difficult one. But the former nearly always wins out and announces his diagnosis.

Thereupon the zar doctor proceeds to decide what course of treatment to follow. [782] The zar is aksed, through the mouth of the patient, what offense has been committed against him; what he would like to receive as "mäqwädäsha" love-gift in order to "pardon" the iniquity, or as damages for the "insult" or "neglect". Finally the zar is asked what he will demand in regular offerings in order to remain on good terms with the possessed, to plague her less and only at regular intervals, and, perhaps, to become her protective spirit. On the basis of the replies, the patient is

X 794 755 assessed membership fees in the zar congregation headed by that particular zar doctor. The patient thus becomes a devotee of the zar ("yäzar welaj").

X 794 782 755 776 Demands of the individual zars range from very simple to very complex. If he is a light-colored zar, he may demand the annual sacrifice of a light-colored goat; if dark, of a black goat. Frequently the demand includes personal attire for the possessed, such as certain trinkets, glass bead necklaces, metal hairpins, spedific hairstyles - all of them attention-getters. The zar warns that he will come and check on the observance of these demands from time to time, and punish any shortcomings with severe suffering.

Sacrifices, "derka", in which a goat or a chicken is slaughtered, are at least partly consumed by the patient (through whom the zar consumes the donation). Sometimes several sacrifices have to be observed as part of one "mäqwädäsha", to appease weaker zar spirits that linger about the more powerful ones, awaiting a vulnerable moment in which to pounce upon the patient, unless pacified.

Some zars are vegetarian, require ablutions in vegetable water, in which mashed vegetables and chewed "c̣hat" ("qat", a drugplant) have been mixed; others perversely like the bitter vermifuge plant kosso and insist that it be placed in the coffee consumed by the possessed patient; still others have made the lemon or the sycamore their symbol.

More zars are carnivorous. One whose symbol (resembling a totem) is a lion, will demand the sacrifice of a tawny-colored goat, or demand X 794 776 755 825 that one of that color be kept in sight at all times so that he can "look" at it. For zars are very fond of using their sight. The wild animals of the bush are considered the "cattle" of the zar, and some

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specialize in "drinking" magically the milk of the lioness or female elephant, etc. When zars appear in dreams, cats and jackals often represent female zars, snakes male zars. But the animals are merely forms which the zars assume temporarily, while the zar spirits themselves retain their demanding-protective identity permanently.

[756] Some zar doctors are considered far more experienced, clever, or specialized than others, so that stubborn cases are referred to them. One of the most stubborn is the zar of epilepsie, called "barya" (lit. Barya tribesman, hence, slave). This zar is believed to have his home in the Nilotic lowlands below the northwest escarpment, a desert and near-desert area inhabited by the Barya people. There this zar is believed in contact with "ganyen" (djinn), from whom he has acquired his evil character. Prognosis in this case is more limited, and all the zar doctor can do is to negotiate an agreement with "barya" to afflict the patient less frequently. Even the diagnosis is difficult, for the patient often has to be restrained, even tied up, and special herbs and procedures are required.

Another difficult case is the patient possessed by several different zars at the same time, which confuses the diagnosis. In this case, the cleverness, experience and diplomacy of the diagnostician are severly taxed, to unravel the tangle, and treat each zar without insulting and neglecting any of the others. The usual procedure is to appease the most powerful one, e.g. "awolye", first, and enlist him as guardian spirit against the others. A really powerful and arrogant zar doctor can go so far as to attempt to treat the personalities of the minor zars themselves. Thus he may give them a severe talking to x794 776 755 (actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly". This "training" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. [782] During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "danqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tänqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

x794 776 821 Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment procedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

x794 rainy season, when they hover in the confinement of their grottoes just
776 as Abyssinians in their huts. Like humans, zar spirits become active
821 soon after the rains, when the "Mäsqäl" feasts approach, the yellow
flowers carpet the landscape and the green grain begins to mature.
The favorite time for zar spirits to strike is between midnight and
about 3 A.M.; but some individualistic spirits specialize in the hour
of sunset, and some even midday.

x794 Belief in the curative powers of the zar doctors is still widespread
and strong among the Amhara. Only in the city of Addis Ababa has the
present government tried to subdue it, so that devotees have to travel
away from the city, for their major reunions. Many men do not like
x794 to admit their belief in the zar spirits or that they themselves consult
562 zar doctors. This is because of the feminine emphasis of the zar cult.
Women are more often possessed, and do not hesitate to admit it; they
often seem to look forward to cult membership. Grown men, however, unless
afflicted with an ailment as obvious as epilepsy, are ashamed to be seen
in a cult group, especially when the cult doctor is a woman. The major
exceptions are the brothers of the woman zar doctor, who are often almost
as pixilated by inheritance and contact with their mother as the doctor
herself; the zar poet and hymn-composer who is usually a man; and the hired
drummer.

b. Characteristics and Attributes of Male and Female "Zar" Spirits.

x794 The organization of the male zar spirits is more complex than that
776 of the female ones. Moreover, several male zar spirits arrogate names
552 to themselves that otherwise are generic: e.g. "Gurēza" - usually generic
for all male zars; "Weqābē"- usually generic for all protective spirits;

x794 "Wadaj" for male zars that specialize in possessing women; "Wuresa" for
776 subordinate zars. Female zars are regarded as "undisciplined" and
552 rarely organize.

The names are often personalizations of characteristics and attributes of the zars. Others are terms of flattery designed to render the zar benevolent; or based on the home region of the zar. In some cases a zar spirit has "ordered" concealment of his real name, so that a new name has had to be abstracted from Amharic, or Geez, or Arabic, or a syncretic mutilation of all three languages. Some zars prefer to be addressed by their "fāräs sem" (knighthood name). Some zars, of Galla Muslim or Amharic Christian affiliation, insist that their name indicate their religious and ethnic identification. Sometimes the meaning of the name is lost, or cannot be traced readily because it is in "zar language" - itself largely a mutilation of Amharic, though this is not admitted. Finally, the poet who performs in the zar cult may think up new adjectives to describe the hoped-for benevolence of the zar, whereupon the zar spirit, pleased, adopts the adjedtive as a byname, or name, decreeing that henceforth he be addressed this way.

Table 12: The Zar Spirits: Their Powers, Social Status, Personalities, Specializations.

Male Zars

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Weqābē (also generic for all protective zar spirits); addressed "bäržäwo Weqābē" - (polite, "by your protection, guiding spirit).	great	high; "educated".	some regard him as originally Galla, But "later educated"	protective	beard; manly beauty so male devotees don't shave.	protects; brings beauty to face of possessed women. Brings "luck". Can predict the future.
Gurēza (lit. colobus monkey), generic name of all male zars; addressed as "mushirra" (lit. bridegroom, Sire).	medium to great	varies with his role.	undefined	mischievous-playful.	monkey	can be turned into a protective spirit, if sufficiently catered to with gifts, and flattery.
Wädaj (lit. lover) also generic for male zars that specialize in possessing women	subordinate to powerful zars.	mostly Muslim		fickle and promiscuous	"çhat" leaf (typically chewed by Muslims)	most common protective Zar of possessed women, who are married or divorced.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult.	Attributes; Major Concerns Specializations
Wurēza (also Werēza, generic for subordinate zars, those serving as pages to powerful zars or still"students")	little power	low; (but some have potentialities).	often Coptic Christian.	resembles adolescent boys and young-warrior personalities.		immature in development, but getting "educated" and therefore potenlially of value as protectors.
Aweliya (from Arabic "waliy" - Saint) (sometimes generic adjective)	great	high	unlimited; regional center at Gondar (town).	tough; can be made protective; generally irascible.	lioness, female elephant, his"cattle".	At present the chief zar possessing Lady Sälämtu, chief zar doctor in Gondar (Begemdir).
Säyfu Çhängär (lit. sword, whipping stick; Arabic). Brother of evil, powerful female zar Rahēlo.	great	High nobility (Commander of Right Guard of zars).	Coptic Christian, friend of Ethiopian Saint Gäbre-Mänfäs-Qeddus.	"educated at Jerusalem" can be powerfully protective.	the lemon tree; his "gända" (mystic coffee tray symbolises the "tabot" of the church.	Adept at medicines, therefore powerful protector; also as commander over many "wädaj" zars whom he can restrain, and to whom he allocates gifts of incense, etc.
Mälak (lit. angel, from Geez language)	medium	medium	of Geez (Semitic) affiliation, hence Coptic Christian	mystic; has veiled original identity	horse (his old name "Färäs", horse, is tabooed by his own order.	appears in dreams in the shape of a horse.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult	Attributes; Major Concerns Specializations
Abba Yosef	great but vulnerable to Coptic religious appeal	medium	religious Copt; in company of Säyfu Çhängär, hence "educated".	very jealous; purist. Can be made protective, (even restrained through amulet of däbbära, since he is religious Copt)		causes miscarriages in married women out of jealousy for husband and as "purist". Undergoes baptism every Ṭemqät (Epiphany), blesses the pool of water like bishop.
Adbar (supposed to mean "protect me") in zar language; "guardian" in Galla language)	medium	medium	religious Copt of ancient times. Dwells in shady churchyards.	outdoor spirit but lazy. Educated, but old and inactive. Can become protective.	trees that give shade.	causes rheumatism, to "keep his horse from moving". Requires sheep sacrifice under shady tree consecrated to him.
Rom-Näddad (lit. flame from Rome; also: malaria (fever)	medium	medium	Christian; in company of Säyfu Çhängär.	educated in Jerusalem; when made protective, teaches use of medicinal herbs.	flame, fire, fever.	regarded as having taught mankind the use of fire and cooking, from his own flame on a rock in the Red Sea. Can make fire by striking his forehead with a finger.
Abba Qwasqas	med.	med.	Coptic Christian	when made protective, inspires success in business caravans, mead houses, construction, real estate.		likes to possess women who have masculine tendencies whom he makes wear jodphurs. (Devotees of this zar are often women operators of mead houses).

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specialisations
Sayd Qadr	med.	med.	Christian	rarely protective; easily angered.	noon	causes indigestion; esp. at midday, when he likes to "descent" into his possessed (this is the hour when food is first taken on "fast days").
Qolē	great	high	believed to be of Galla ethnic origin, lowland jungle region.	terrible when angry; stubborn, does not perform "gurri" easily. When made protective, spirit of "hearth and home"; and aids hunters, by "laming" the game.		neglect causes him to destroy harvests, kill cattle, abort women, bring locusts; at other times he is "lazy zar" causing rheumatism. Requires animal sacrifice under sycamore.
Barya (lit. slave)	sometimes great	low	believed from Nilotic Sudan of "Barya" (negroid) people, whence he has come to wreak vengeance for the enslavement of his people by the Amhara.	evil, very stubborn, never protective; at most agrees to plague the patient less. Sometimes attacks in group, led by their chief "Legēwon", like a tornado, who has red eyes.	tornado	causes epilepsy ("hemama barya") especially in men, whom he prefers to posses. The convulsions are his orgies. But he is vulnerable to spellbinding formulae of dăbtăra.

Name	Power	Social Statue of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "Zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Gamyu (lit. tonsure) addressed as "Dämmänä"-cloud	med.	low	home in bamboo forest of Western escarpment near Metemma (Sudan border); Galla.	Can be made protective spirit.	cloud ("Dämmänä") also bamboo.	feeds on bamboo; only plagues on occasion, especially caravans passing through his district.
Qallechcha	med.	low	Galla Muslim, from Wollega province.	Rarely protective, but has power only in limited regions. When protective, teaches rare medicines and healing.		requires offerings under special trees consecrated to him: is fond of blood esp. of chickens.
Grañ Sellatä (lit. left-handed hem).	medium	low	"pagan"	when protective teaches effective healing. Considered wise.		specialist on desires of other zars, expert on their animal sacrifices. Can aid zar doctors in their negotiations with other zars.
Shēh Anbäso (sometimes synonym for Aweliya) (lit. lion)	great	high	Muslim, but with Christian relatives.	rarely protective. Considered negative side of Aweliya zar.	lion	requires tawny goat as sacrifice, to symbolize lion. Was husband of "Rahēlo. Commands 98 zars of the "house of the left guard".

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Shēh Ebübo (lit. Chief Snake)	med.	med.	Muslim	rarely protective	snake	appears in dreams by his symbol, the snake.
Wäyane	med.	low		evil spirit		inspires rebellion among warriors against chiefs; among feudal lords against king.
Weshenger	med.	low		mischievous, but not evil		likes to cause sudden, violent rain, rendering caravans helpless in the mud.
Käbrä (lit. glory, honored one)	med.	med.	believed to have his home in Tigrē province.	protective spirit for hunters.		hunting
Gommari (lit. the proud, vain, defiant	med.	low	lives in bush	can become protective	big male of baboon family-"gämäre"	warlike and leadership qualities.
Ber Alänga (lit. silver whip)	med.	med.		very greedy; rarely protective except for very rich patients.		interested in economic exploitation. The "rich man's zar".

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "Zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major concerns/ Specializations
Azzaj Deha (lit. Commander of the poor)	med.	low	lives in ashes and dirty hovels	very distrustful; will not negotiate unless guarantor ("wās") has been posted whom he will plague in case of non-payment, Can become protective.		the "poor man's zar".

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Female Zars

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the"zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Rahēlo	very great, Chief female zar.	high	once carried off by the "ganyēn" (djinn) to the Blue Nile, but saved by her brother Säyfu C̣hängär; however, impregnated in the rape, she gave birth to the evil "zars of bhe left guard". Christian, yet was married to Muslim Shōh Anbäso.	evil, never becomes protective.	lemon tree (like her brother).	causes miscarriages, preferably in rich or noblewomen, for she is a snob. Amulets and formulae of däbtära may have power against her.
Shanqit	med.	low; servant of Rahelo	Shanqalla (lowland negroid tribe below southwest border). Considered "pagan".	fickle like all female zars, but can become protective.		possesses only ex-slave and very low-class women. If protective, will teach how to be a good hostess, which Shanqit has learned while serving Rahelo.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Shoṭälay	great	med.	no special affiliation; ranges unlimited.	very evil, never protective.		renders women sterile and barren, even kills babies. Drinks blood magically, causing victim to waste away (like "buda"). Hence zar doctors try to exorcise her completely, by transferring the possession onto a chicken, killing it in the open, throwing it away.
Aynä Ṭela (lit. shadow eye. Hence-evil eye).	med.	low	no special affiliation.	evil, never protective, but not very powerful when alone. Parasitic zar, waiting for the spoils left by other zars.		general troublemaker. Tries to prevent patient from entering trance properly, confusing the "diagnosis", confusing other zars when about to reveal their names. Likes to attack men that have been attacked by other zars and thus weakened.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Sawbädayt	little	low	regional in watercourses and lakes and the sea.	regarded as mermaid, as half-fish, as result of intercourse she had with Gĕdewon, king of the sea.		occasionally endangers people crossing streams or exposed to drowning.
Teggerta (also called Waddegeni)	great	med.	considered universal	evil, but can be cajoled by continuous attention and cultivation. Treated also by amulets of däbtära.		causes apathy, depression, datatonic states, esp. in women, esp. after childbirth. Patient must be coaxed with delicacies, bright ornaments, music and dancing. Also causes psychotic delusions, in either men or women.

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794 776 From this complex array of the plaguing - but often also protective-spirit world, it becomes clear that there is a great deal of significance in the zar cult beyond mere healing of mental ailments; even beyond the organizing of patients into groups of devotees - a kind of group therapy with religious overtones. There is an extension of the acquired "protection" so that some zars become not only protective spirits of individuals, but patron saints of certain social groups in Amhara society, e.g. some specialize in the rich and noble, some in the poor or low-class; some in hunters and warriors; etc. But although religious affiliations are usually identified sharply, there is considerable crossing of the lines in the spirit world so that Coptic Christian spirits may have Muslim names, and even practice [812] religious intermarriage. Another important contribution made by the zar cult is that it orders nature, explains nature to the Amhara mind, yet allows enough flexibility (e.g. in regional variations, and the continuously increasing and decreasing power of individual zars) to admit new information, new revelations, to be fitted into the traditional construct. For example, in the 1930's the dominant zar spirit in Gondar was Śäyfu C̣hángär (ascertained by a French expedition); in 1953/1954 it was Aweliya. Since zar spirits can have successful and unsuccessful careers, so can humans; hence, new ideas, even modern ones, can be fitted into the spiritual world.

But the major character of the "zar" complex is that of a healing cult.

794 756 796 c. The Annual Convention ("amat bal") of the "Zar" Doctors; Voluntary Possession in the "Zar" Cult.

On the 23rd night of the month of Ýakatit, the day before the beginning of the Coptic Christian lent, the "zar" doctors of Gondar hold

x794 their annual convention,("amat bal", lit. the annual event). This is
756 about the time when the rest of the Christian world celebrates its
796 mardi Gras, Carnevale, Fasching. The timing of the convention is
probably no accident, for there begins, the day after the noisy Convention, the period of "kudadē" (lit. suffering) in the life of Christ, priests would hardly permit the noisy and gay celebration during lent.

The convention takes place in Addis Aläm (lit. new world), the oldest section of Gondar town, once restricted to Muslims and other non-Copts.

Unlike Western Conventions of doctors and scientists, the zar Convention does not consist of calm, objective, sometimes mononotous and even icy presentations. Instead, in the convention of "zar" doctors new techniques are subjectively demonstrated on participant zar devotees who are chronically possessed; diagnostic aids are utilized in actual treatment of actual patients; new poetry to cajole specific spirits is recited in ecstatic chants to the beat of the drum, while the audience joins in with refrain-chanting and rythmic handclapping. It is a super - "wädāja" (lit. love-feast) of the zar cult, bigger and better than ordinary zar cult activities, and introducing new experience, but in principle follows the same basic procedures of luring protective zars into public "possession" of the affected, and enlisting them in the diagnosis and treatment of ailments caused by evil or mischievous zar spirits.

x794 In view of the esoteric elements in the zar cult, it is little
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123 wonder that the "amat bal" is restricted to zar doctors and permanent
796 devotees. Therefore it was not easy for a "European" observer like the

x794 present author to be permitted to attend this all-night session.
756 123 Careful negotiations through a trusted intermediary person had to be
796 arranged ahead of time. For at any time the chief of the zar doctors could end the negotiations on the ground that some of the "zar" spirits would be offended or repelled, and refuse to come into full possession of their "horses" in the presence of a stranger. An additional antagonistic element was fear of the local police detectives, who, though they do not interfere with the zar cult, have orders from the self-concious central government not to let foreigners witness it.

x794 The chief zar doctor of Gondar in the present generation is the
756 Lady (woyzäro") Sälämtew, She is renowned even outside the entire province (Begemdir-Semyen), as far as Tigre province and even in Addis Ababa. This is perhaps more due to her position than her own initiative, for Gondar has long been considered the city of powerful spirits and traditions. She leaves most healing activities to her disciple "balä zar", except for very stubborn cases. More often she is busy as "consultant", for many clients, even non-devotees of the zar cult, bring their family or business or litigation problems to her. She herself is possessed by several powerful, protective male zars, to whom she ascribes her various powers, from whom she receives inspiration, the spirit of enterprise, courage to experiment in perfect comfort and security without the fear of the evil eye which hampers other individuals engaging in anything new.

She is not afraid of the pinpricks of medium and minor "zar" spirits, for her whole like is devoted to the service of the most powerful ones. One of the latter has strong Coptic Christian affiliations and learning, and guides her in her cautious and unofficial x794 756 relations with the priests of the Abyssinian Coptic church; e.g. by whispering to her when to give them private feasts, and how to guide observant Amhara clients - married couples in domestic strife - so as not to come into conflict with the "mänfäs gubaē" (lit. soul father, confessor, who would normally arbitrate such a case for the church).

Another of her powerful zars teaches her medicine, and specializes in the diagnosis of difficult cases of possession. Still another is a specialist on what the other zars prefer as sacrifices, taboos, poetry, and how to negotiate with each of them; (i.e. he teaches her how to function like a priestess).

Another of her zars specializes in business advice: when to buy and sell what; when and how to invest in caravans, or invest in construction of town houses. Occasionally she also takes incidental advice from low-status spirits such as Shanqit, who gives her minor hints on how to be a good hostess when entertaining a "telleq säw" (great man) who comes to her in secret; and on how to manage her large household.

Lady Sälämtu's posture, when not undergoing possession herself, is one of benign self-assurance, not unlike the calm, almost phlegmatic composure of Amhara nobles who act as if everything must come to them. For Lady Salamtew appears sincere and certain of being able to draw on her private reservoir of protective zar spirits almost any night she chooses.

x794 756 123 115 The writer's negotiations with her were conducted through his guide, himself a native of the Addis Aläm section of Gondar, and who, though young, occupied some status as "educated" (seven grades of modern elementary school). Moreover, he was not unknown to Lady Salamtew, for his father, a well-known "wogäsha" doctor in Gondar, had often referred x794 756 123 [116] patients to her when his organic medicines had not helped. It was this guide who hit on the idea of flattering Lady Sälämtew by notifying her that the foreigner was sick, suffering from severe headaches, sleeplessness and chronic intestinal cramps - (all common ailments in her practice), and that he would trust only her for treatment. Whether or not Lady Salamtew believed this, it indicated to her that the foreigner would fit himself into the framework and procedures of her zar cult, and not become a disturbing element that might "offend" her zar spirits.

The guide had taken the further precaution of negotiating with her through her brothers, who were willing to encourage her to accept, in the hope of gifts and rewards. As a result, Lady Salamtew accepted in principle; but in line with the unhurried dignity of her position she had the foreigner informed that he should send the guide again at a later time when she would make known the conditions under which he might attend the "amat bal" convention. In appreciation for having reached this point in the negotiation, the guide left her brothers with some "eṭan gänzäb" (money for frankincense).

The next step was reached when Lady Salamtu expressed the wish to have the foreigner appear before her, some days before the convention, so that she could look him over.

x794 756 123 361 [342] Her house, a semimodern affair of hard-mud walls, is reached by a steep downhill trail from the Gondar town market. On the lower level (the old section of Gondar called "Addis Alam") many houses and huts are built on the foundations of stone houses destroyed by the dervishes in the late 19th century. This section, once restricted to Muslim and other non-Coptic minorities, is now largely inhabited by Muslim Ethiopian weavers and retail traders, many ex-slaves of Sudanese or part-Shanqalla x794 756 123 361 descent, and a few poor Amhara Coptic families, as well as some Amhara who do business there, such as the "wogasha" doctor. Various elements which do not wish to be under too close scrutiny by the church or the police prefer to live in this section. Here the "zar" societies can pound their drums as loudly as the cult requires, for only muffled sounds will rise to the Coptic part of the town.

x794 756 123 After stooping to pass through the somewhat low entrance to the house of Lady Sälämtew, the visitor finds himself in a room larger than he had anticipated. He is told to remove his shoes, (as if this were a church or mosque). The room is lit by numerous little clay oil lamps even in daytime - a considerable luxury, - for windows have been carefully avoided or boarded up to assure privacy. On the mud-benches around the wall sit a number of women; others sit on mats on the hard-mud floor. An Amhara male visitor in European type suit, who has just consulted the Lady Salamtu, leaves hurriedly. Lady Salamtu is seated on a raised platform at the far end of the room, behind a curtain, and another area in front of her stage is marked off by a long, thin wooden beam embedded in the floor. The women devotees in the room are busily spinning cotton with their little distaffs, and, since it is still afternoon and not yet "zar time", whisper and gossip with each other freely. Some take time out to suckle their babies, often without rising.

Someone has gone behind the curtain and whispered to her that the foreigner and his guide have arrived. She promptly pulls the curtain aside, but pretends to pay no special attention to the visitor. Her active zars have not possessed her at this time, and she therefore appears absent-minded. She sits on a slightly raised seat on the small

X794 756 123 stage, her legs crossed almost Turkish fashion, very unlike the usual Amhara posture. She is in her late forties, a rather stocky, powerful woman. Her features are heavy, and she seems at least half-Sudanese. She reinforces the non-Amhara, alien aspects of her appearance by wearing large, yellow, metal bracelets and anklets, and a Muslim-type deep red print cloth over her hair and shoulders. The dirt floor of her platform is covered with sheepskins. Whoever rises is careful not to turn her back to Lady Salamtu. Whenever she moves, there is an attentive hush in the whisperings. In the far corner the smoke of incense rises slightly and blends with the light smoke of the oil lamps.

The only males in the room are the two brothers of Lady Salamtu, and it is with them that the guide begins his whispered negotiations. The visit is brief. Before leaving, the guide advises the foreigner to leave Lady Salamtew some "frankincense money." The foreigner understands that he is to give it to her directly - which is a faux pas - and crosses over the separating beam to place the money in her hand. Only after deveral days does he learn that this was a breach of protocol, for by touching her hand he might have removed one of her valuable zars "by contagion".

Some days later the negotiators make known their conditions for permitting the foreigner to witness the "amat bal" annual convention. He is to send: three dollars worth of imported incense including frankincense, sandalwood, also sesame seeds; one dollar's worth of coffee beans; a small amount of gunpowder which is pleasing to one of her zars; one bottle of "araqi" (arrak) distilled liquor. The foreigner is forbidden to take any written notes (which a foreign missionary had one done) on the grounds that this is displeasing to the zar. He is warned x794 756 123 not to cross the boundary in front of the stage again. He is not to approach the house until well after nightfall, and is to come by a back trail, so as not to be seen by passersby.

x794 796 123 Thus, after nightfall on the 23rd of the month of Y̆akatit, he climbed over eroded back trails down to the "Kokit" section of Addis Aläm and approached the house of Lady Sälämtu where her devotees were assembled. It was 7:30 P.M. More oil lamps had been lit. There were about 20 women, but a male zar doctor with talents in poetry and chanting sat near the stage, wearing a white turban much like a Coptic Abyssinian priest. A powerful male drummer had been hired for the occasion.

x794 796 [123] Lady Sälämtew still took no official notice of the foreigner, for her zar had not yet "descended", and without that she was just a hollow shell, a mute "horse". One of her brothers motioned the foreigner politely to a seat on the mudbench that ringed the wall. There was much subdued whispering, as if a momentous event was about to take place. The hairdo of several of the women devotees and doctors had [302] been specially arranged to honor their individual zars: those not permitted to cut their hair had plaited it into a braid ("zurosh") surrounding the skull; others had shaved a circle in the middle (called "gucho"), like a little girl.

x794 796 778 Other preparations and paraphenalia included the ritual coffee trays ("gända"), which symbolized the wooden "tabot" (sacred tablet) of the holy Coptic city of Aksum, and which were dedicated to several zars including Säyfu Çhängär and Rahēlo. The ancient mother of many zars, named "Wärär" was believed to have stolen the original "tabot"

×794 796 778 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

×794 796 782 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before. In addition to "eṭan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka" was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

×794 796 756 781 [533] About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued. The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzäro Sālämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

X794 796 756 781 of Lady Salamtew's body. The twisting began like an embrace, with her head thrown back, rotating movements of the chest, followed by a rythmic forward bump of belly and hipsl Her ecstatic shrieks varied from pain to exultation (like bhe "ellel" of women in the Coptic church service). Encouraging shouts came from individual women in the audience, and some raised their holiday - reddened palms in prayerful joy. As the climax approached, the jerky twisting of Lady Salamtew's body gradually changed to smoother movements of the limbs. She was now well in tune with her zar, and he was comfortable within her. The excitement in the audience changed to warm and glowing emotion at the same time. Then Lady Salamtew emitted a loud scream, and dropped in a heap. The drum stopped abruptly. There was a sudden hush in the audience. The strong sweet odor of generously burned incense pervaded the consciousness and its smoke leisurely curled upward.

X794 756 796 It was only a matter of minutes before Lady Salamtew recovered. Her brother pulled the curtain to one side. Her eyes were bright with curiosity as she glanced about the house as if she had just arrived. She had lost her absent-minded appearance, for now the zar acted and spoke through her. Suddenly she appeared to notice the foreigner for the first time, smiled and waved a friendly greeting. Her voice was still husky, but warm, as she called out "how are you" in understandable Amharic, rather than her esoteric "zar language"; this was a courtesy, though [195] [123] she used the female familiar gender (the zar often uses the inverted genders in address). She further inquired whether the foreigner was sitting in comfort, and how his health was today (hinting at the "ailments" he had used as a pretext). Then she ordered the handmaidens to offer the foreigner talla (barley beer), and coffee, on one of the zar coffee trays.

x794 756 796 She then proceeded to greet the individual zar doctors and devotees as if she had been absent a long time. Each rose and bowed deeply to her. Barley beer was now passed around freely, while coffee beans were being roasted and crushed, in preparation for the next intermission.

x794 782 796 [533] Refreshed and heartened, the male zar doctor serving as poet now began to chant the hymns he had composed in honor of "aweliya" the chief male zar of Lady Salamtew. The rythm was as formal as the hymns chanted by the dabtara in the Coptic Abyssinian church, but contained Arabic loanwords borrowed from the traders' vernacular. The audience quickly leaned the response and accompanied the responsive chant with rythmic handclapping:

Poet: "Salaam" (lit. "Peace", greeting; similar in Geez and Arabic languages).

Crowd: "Salaam Alēkum" (lit."Peace be with you", in Arabic).

Poet (continuing in Amharic): "Enter, warrior; enter warrior! "

Crowd: (repeats the same words).

Poet: "Lord Aweliya, what have I given to him (polite address) that he may be merciful to me?"

Crowd: (repeats same chant in more wailing pitch).

Poet: "Flower (synonym for youth), oh zar, flower!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: He is Lord of Sera, Lord of Mora is he". (Polite address).

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "He, bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Crowd: "Bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Poet: "Like a lion, like a leopard, when he roars!"

Crowd: (repeats).

x 794 Poet: "My witness (also can mean "faith"), Aweliya; my witness!"

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796 Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "May it be, to be healed, let me be!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: "My prophet, my prophet, peace be with you".

Crowd: (repeats).

Now that Aweliya has been greeted and his protection invoked, individual "balä zar" (zar doctors as well as chronically possessed patient-devotees) can invite and lure their individual zars to take public "possession" of the devotee, who then dances the individual "gurri" victory dance of the particular zar. In luring the zar, they invite him with incense that he likes and with poetry composed by the zar doctor who serves as the poet of the convention.

It is now 9:30 P.M. Now that Sweliya, a Coptic zar is present, the poet invites Galla zar spirits from the Raya and Azabo territory of eastern Ethiopia:

Poet (chanting): "Aweliya, you are merciful, merciful you are;
my Lord, you are merciful".

Crowd: "Yehun" (lit. "May he be", polite address; this is a frequent refrain).

Poet: "If we believe in you, if we have faith, Aweliya, you will be merciful!"

Crowd: "Amēn".

Poet: "Hear, oh prophet, we greet you; hear, oh prophet, we greet you!"

Crowd: "May you be" (greeted).

Poet: "The coffee has boiled,
the pilgrimage has been fulfilled;
hear, oh prophet, we greet you".

x 794 782 796 Crowd: "Amān".

Poet: "Raya, Raya, we are calling;
Azābo, Azābo, we are calling!"

Crowd: "May you be".

Poet: "This will bring him to me;
now it will entice him!"

Crowd: "Amān".

Poet: "Azäbo ! Raya ! I am calling!"

x 794 781 796 When he stops there is an expectant hush. A woman zar doctor seated on a mat amid the crowd begins to sway backward and forward, still in a sitting position. All eyes turn to her, for this is the beginning of the "gurri" of her zar, and the spirit is beginning to move her. She begins to rise, still swaying. Her neighbors hold her lightly for a moment and remove her long necklaces which have metal objects attached that might hurt her or someone else in the spinning movements that are to follow. Now fully on her feet, the possessed begins to twirl, omitting hoarse shrieks. She spins faster and faster, like a top. Several times she slows a little, raises her arms rythmically, and contorts head, then chest, belly and hips, while her zar descends into magic coitus with her. Each time she spins again, to the ever faster tythm of the drum and the rythmic handclapping. The other women encourage her on to the orgiastic climax with shouts of "ahun" (now) and "yehun" (let it be). Her shrieks turn to long whines. After about 15 minutes of this "gurri", she falls in a heap, suddenly, exhausted, shouting "ahun" (now) herself with her last effort, then lies silent and motionless.

x794 782 796 The poet now lures the "pagan" zar Gamyu, whose home is in a bamboo forest in the Metemma lowland of the eastern escarpment of Ethiopia.

Poet: "Tall bamboo you (lit. he) will eat; bamboo you will devour;
Lord, named "Dämmäna" (lit. cloud), from where you devour bamboo;
Gamyu, Gamyu, Gamyu, pure honey (flattering synonym for healer) !
dance eyaho, eyaho dance, Oh Gamyu!"

Thereupon one of the women devotees who has shaved a tonsure in the center of her skull ("Gamyu" comes from "gamye", meaning tonsure), which is the visible requirement he makes of those whom he "possesses", begins to rise. The "gurri" she dances differs only in details from the one performed for the Galla zar spirits.

It is now 11:00 P.M. The various male zars expected on the program for the evening have now "descended". It is time for the female zars to begin making their descent, which is safe, now that many protective male zars are about.

x794 796 781 Word is whispered around that a male and a female zar who "will bite" are about to attack some of the possessed. Everyone rises and crowds close to the wall, leaving the hearth and the center of the room [124] free. Only Lady Sälämtew seems unafraid. She calls out a warning to the foreigner, in her husky voice but in friendly tone, advising him to stand on the bench so as not to be bitten. "Ayzäw" (be well, be of good courage, be of good cheer) she calls out to the foreigner, using the [195] polite address, and forgetting to use the familiar 2nd person singular feminine, which is her privilege.

This time the possession begins differently. Two women detach themselves from the frightened crowd almost simultaneously. Both x794 796 781 women cower on all fours, snarl at each other, snort like angry leopards, showing their teeth. They crouch like wildcats about to spring at each other, their faces turned to the ground, and eying each other only intermittently. A shallow, large clay dish filled with barley beer is set on the floor for them, and the two antagonists compete with each other in lapping up the drink like cats.

One of the women is possessed by an evil female zar, the other by a mean male zar. The male zar snaps at the female zar, who is of equal power and status. Appearing stimulated by the drink, they chase each other about the room, still cowering, snorting, attacking, retreating, finally grasping each other in a battle clinch, and actually nipping at each other. When this happens, the Lady Salamtu rises quickly, and descends into the arena wielding a thick leather strap. The contestants roll on and off one another and begin to bite seriously, but before damage is done, Lady Sälämtu swishes her strap, pulls them apart or separates them with light blows.

This battle is accompanied with drumbeat and rythmic handclapping by the crowd. The contestants do not rejoin battle but roam very rapidly as if blind and lost, sniffing the ground as if they depended on the sense of smell, until they fall exhausted in a heap. But a few moments later they run to Lady Sälämtew, kiss her hand, and prostrate themselves before her on the dirt floor in front of the platform. Thus the female and minor zars pay homage to the powerful male zars that possess Lady Salamtew, and acknowledge that they have learned to keep within bounds and not do very severe damage.

x794 796 262 It is now 11:30 P.M. and a brief recess is announced. A young, part-Sudanese servant woman, and ex-slave, serves coffee, barley beer, x794 796 262 araqi, and also round, solid wheat discs (Qiṭṭa")- the unleavened bread of travelers, expensive when made of wheat.

x794 781 [782] About midight, the convention proceeds, with the poet intoning the call for the female zar "Shazqit (see table for her characteristics):

Poet: "Dance, round and round, brave one;
Shanqit, we are calling; brave one".

Both men and women clap more fiercely than over, in quick rythm Suddenly the servant woman who had served the latest refreshments stiffens with a jerk, screams, and lets the tray slide from her hand. She is about to be possessed by the female zar of her class and occupation. This "gurri" is infantile in character. The young woman begins to skip about the room like a young goat or an overly gay little girl. She teasingly pokes at the men, again and again, until a few copper coins are given her. When this happens, she jumps high with glee. But a moment later she is back, pouting, demanding some sweets, asking for honey. Given some, she devours it, and dances a victory dance, flipping about on tiptoe. The drumbeat quickens. Finally she falls exhausted, her zar now in full possession of her.

x794 796 688 There is another hush, awaiting further demonstrations. But there is an unscheduled interlude which reinforces discipline. The woman who had danced the "pagan" gurri had left shortly afterward, ostensibly for a call of nature, but had hot returned until now, far too long an absence without permission. Seeing her enter, Lady Sälämtew rises, shouting angrily, walkes toward her and heats her on the upper back with the heavy strap, several times, rather hard. The victim stands with bowed head, not stirring under the punishment, evidently

x794 realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew.
796 [688] Back on her throne, Lady Sälämtew harshly admonishes the audience for dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Sälämtu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)", When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

x794 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer.
535 796 Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxicated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Sälämtew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and
[293] faster, Lady Sälämtew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

X794 535 796 "ellel" as shrilly as they do outside church during Coptic services. Exhausted, the powerful woman finally collapsed, and the curtain was quickly drawn to hide her during her recovery.

X794 796 Several other zar doctors demonstrated their individual "fukkara" activities. But more and more participants grew inattentive, and some began to doze. Lady Sälämtew declared the session ended at about [513] 3 A.M. The women bedded down right on the floor or the mud bench, while the men who lived nearby went home, and others rolled up in blankets and skins just outside the house, under the overhanging roof. It was a cold night, usual during cloudless month of Yäkatit.

The season of the roaming zar spirits had once again been concluded, not to revive in full vigor until after the rainy season half a year later. At the convention much protection had been gained, and old protection reinforced against the many mischievous zars that might plague people in the meantime.

d) Social Asrects of the Zar Cult.

X794 608 The groups of chronically possessed persons who meet regularly as devotees of the zars, in the "wädaja" (lit. love feast), constitute what are called "aqwädash" (sometimes "aqṭac̣ha"), face-to-face societies. Their interpersonal relationships soon become social, much like the mähabbär communal worship society of the church. Both establish bonds which, to the Amhara mind, become "artificial kinship". Not infrequently this leads to the establishment of bonds of actual affinal kinship (as described earlier).

X794 772 The parallel can also be applied to an understanding of the leadership involved. Much like the mähabbär is led and blessed by the priest-confessor, so the zar society is led and blessed by the x794 772 zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzäro Sälämtew. The zar complex, to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human world, making it complete. [562] Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

x794 562 This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks. [566] Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner" female, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under [164] their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia, apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical [755] considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar-devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected, acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression, individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which suppresses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been described.

x794 562 Some women with hysterical tendencies revert to infantile behavior. In the zar society they can act this out, while protected and disciplined by the matriarchal zar doctor. Others, with a father-complex, join zar societies headed by male zar doctors. In either case they enjoy recreation and amusement with the "sibling"devotees, with whom they can gossip and enact sibbling roles, such as playfully accusing each other of minor oversights in the service of the zar; (it often takes this form).

Even her life outside the zar society becomes changed. For she is now considered as guided by a protective zar who can extend his [826] protection to other members of the family. Her husband, even if he objects to the zar, often will admit the radiant beauty of her face and her bearing, due to the "weqabi" (protective zar). As a result of her exposure to businesswomen, the menfolk in her family will not shunt her aside when talking business, or legal or kin matters. Some women devotees whose bent is more feminine, become midwives, "experts" in domestic obstetrics and primitive gynecology. There are many ways in which the woman's social status improves. No longer is she a mere hauler of water and hewer of wood. This change usually relieves her mental ailment - and this cure is ascribed to the zar doctor and the zar complex.

x794 562 776 As a result, a good, protective zar is valuable, and a mother will try to pass it on to her daughter, or her own sibling, or other members of the family. To do this, the zar doctor must be consulted and a special gift given "to the zar". But a person having a protective zar is regarded as having an optional right to pass the zar on through biological inheritance and transfer for seven generations. The "zar"-

x794 562 776 [591] possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

x794 562 593 It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives' joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, "for the zar".

x794 562 593 684 Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor, actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the (mänfäs gubaä" (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

x 794 Some women, particularly those possessed by the female zar Shanqit,
562 593 learn to solicit money from strangers (as described during the conven-
[548] tion). Some women thus gradually enter the path to prostitution, while
others become independent businesswomen.

The atiitude of husbands of zar-possessed wives varies and often is ambivalent. A rustic balagär often fears that if he refuses the time and money and sacrifices demanded by his wife for her zar, the neglected zar will take worse revenge (e.g. on his cattle) or will send locusts to eat his grain, or so distract his wife that she will set fire to the hut. He knows also that if he divorces her, half his cattle and other movable property will be taken by the wife. Thus it is cheaper to let her take an occasional chicken or, more rarely, a ylung goat to the zar. Some men, especially in town, are ashamed to admit that their wives frequent the house of the zar. Semi-educated men, who might themselves consult the zar doctor on some matter of business, forbid their wives to go there. This is more to protest a blow to their prestige than out of modernism, but they will divorce her if she persists.

x 794 A chronically unhappy marriage not infrequently ends in divorce
586 798 by way of the zar cult. The "mänfäs gubaē" is placed in an awkward
position when the husband or the wife sue for divorce from their "semanya" marriage on the grounds of zar possession. For while as priest of the Coptic church he cannot admit the reality of the zar world, there is sufficient overlap between that and the world of evil
x 794 spirits in which the priest does (unofficially) believe and against
798 which he may himself, as däbtära, have written amulets. This explains at least in part why the Coptic church ignores the zar cult, and thus

X 794 [798] tolerates it, as long as the residential location of the zar house is sufficiently beyond hearing distance of the church.

[562] Men are often ashamed to admit that they themselves are zar-possessed devotees. If possessed by a feminine zar, considered more stupid and ignorant than a male zar, in most cases, it is considered [782] possible to "outwit" her. A clever zar doctor may negotiate with a female zar to accept a consecrated hen, never to be slaughtered for her, merely to be looked at. The owner of the hen can then sell the eggs, and has a (totemically?) protected hen!

[787] More often, men consult zar doctors on business - though by stealth. In the town of Gondar, e.g., a man wishing to find a job for his nephew might present the problem to Lady Salamtew, who would listen quietly, accept his "frankincense money", and tell him to return on a certain day for her advice.

X 794 782 443 The economic significance of the zar cult varies, but can be considerable especially in the provincial towns. Most zar spirits, especially the powerful and clever ones, like "generosity" in sacrifices, are pleased by voluptuousness, insist on healthy animals for sacrifice, neat gifts and attire of their "horses" (a woman who is a clotheshorse would certainly be regarded as possessed), incense that has been imported from Yemen, aromatic herbs, imported perfumes, European utensils and alcoholic beverages (distilled arrak). Retail traders know this and encourage women to buy "nice things for the zar". It is well known that many women are "struck" by the spirit for the first time just after having visited ("window shopped" in the modern equivalent) a big market. No wonder zar doctors are popular with the Muslim Ethiopian retail traders, who not infrequently let them take some fancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission.

000 some fancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission.

x 794 756 556 Some zar doctors are very exacting with their regular patient-devotees, and therefore, by local standards, are quite rich. They invest in real estate such as semi-modern shacks of the "street of single girls". Many female zar doctors and some of the clever devotees own the profitable mead houses ("ṭäj byēt") described before. On the other hand, a great zar doctor is expected to show generosity and distribute part of the income to followers and assistant zar doctors, just as feudal Amhara chiefs distribute loot to their retainers, and as great zar spirits offer commensal rights to the little zars.

Because of the greed of the zar spirits, a kind of evil eye in itself, many "possess" hide their property from the zar doctor as well as the zar spirits. It is believed that their demands are never satisfied, that the more they are given the more they want, in "mäqwädäsha" (lit. that which makes to love) gifts. Some zar spirits possessing a poor person are regarded as always on the lookout for "contagion" with a rich person, for, by putting a "touch" on him they can change "residence". Zar doctors competing with each other sometimes lure a zar away from another doctor on purpose, so that they can advertise, through the grapevine of the possessed, that a great protective zar has changed residence, thus increasing the fame and income of the ambitious zar doctor. It is well known that in times of scarcity there are few new "possessions" by the zar, while in times of abundance there are many.

A poor person, who is struck, usually by a low-status "poor man's zar", and approaches a zar doctor for treatment of his ailment, is treated but must work off the "gifts" in service, through labor. A poor man will act as a servant, run errands, weave reed baskets, etc.

X794 756 556 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping, fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 675 776 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for each patient devotee is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited repossession, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of other members of the family of the patient at least until after her death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next generation to assure himself continuation of the proferred gifts.

X794 776 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of atonement ("yäbaṭer gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the "yämehrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight [691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One zar spirit is nicknamed "wās aggach" because he always requires a personal guarantor, "wās", whom he will "possess" in place of the patient in case of default in payments.

X794 694 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance. Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

x794 771 The religious and ethnic syncretism of the zar cult is evident from the descriptions given above. This is not too surprising, partly because of the great age of the cult, partly because of the emphasis on "free enterprise" in the zar cult.

x794 776 The cosmology of the zar spirits themselves indicates considerable crossing of boundary lines. Some live in regions other than their ancestral homes. Some have "married" zar spirits of other religions, or have produced "offspring" of mixed "ethnic ancestry". But despite this crossing, most zar spirits are identified with a specific religious, or ethnic, or religious affiliation.

x794 776 781 The human patients, however, are not bound to join a zar spirit of their own affiliation. Very often they do not. This is one of the forms of "free experimentation" - though not on purpose, and unconscious in most cases. A mistreated Amhara wife often joins a predominantly Muslim zar society because "possessed by a Muslim zar"; yet continues as a Coptic Christian in ordinary life. Christian Amhara people believe that Muslim girls about the age of puberty very often become zar possessed, not infrequently by a Coptic zar. Some Coptic zars are believed to take special interest in religious festivals, and if they possess a Coptic woman they may "inspire" her to dance in public outside the church on Ṭemqät (Epiphany).

Several of the more powerful, male, Coptic Christian zars are regarded as "educated in Jerusalem". Their demands are more subtle: e.g. in place of the unimaginative staple demand of pagan zars for a chicken sacrifice, Christian "Jeruslame-trained" zars may require the purchase of a coffee cup of a certain specified color, from which the "possessed" alone may drink.

x794 776 781 177 771 Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the facter of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar !

x794 776 771 Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Šayfu C̣hängär. The archangels Mikaēl and Gabriēl, who are given feasts on taskar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Ṭemqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant during the lenten season.

[798] In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

x794 198 e.) The "Zar Language": Origin and Diffusion of the Zar Cult.

The "zar language" is used by professional zar doctors not only furing the cult services themselves, but also in daily like, e.g. in response to a greeting; whenever they wish to establish a situation of separateness. Lay Amhara believe that the "zar language" is a completely different, esoteric language. [797] They do not recognize that it is mainly deformed Amharic, plus paraphrases, and loanwords, often similarly deformed, from Arabic, Galla and other geographically neighboring languages. The zar doctors pretend that even they themselves, (mere "horses"), do not understand the zar language, but that it is the zar possessing them who speaks through them in this case, not wanting to be understood by mere humans. Some zars make more frequent use of their esoteric language, notably the "wereza", a group of minor zars.

x794 198 114 Among foreign scholars who have examined the "zar language" the most notable is Dr. Leslau [103], who calls it an "argot":

> "Abstract ideas are expressed by concrete words......
> Deformation of the root, either by replacing a consonant or by lengthening of the whole root, is used.....
> Some words are taboo, such as salt, the tray on which cups of coffee are served, the plant çhat, the horse, etc......
> The morphology of the argot is Amharic throughout....
> "addam" (man or woman possessed by a spirit) becomes "addamit"; rain is referred to as "urine of the clouds"; "ṭänqway", sorcerer, becomes "manqway"........

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[103] Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, Vol. 19, pp. 204-212. London, July 1949.

x794 198 114 "Arabic loanwords include:

Alla (h)	- master, God, heaven
Awleya	- (from Arabic "awliya", plural of waliy, saint), chief zars
Kafir	- Arabic term for the Christian Ethiopians
Qwaha	- coffee (from Arabic qahwa; Amharic uses "bunna"); coffee and perfume are taken over from Arabs, and are essential parts of the Zar ceremony.

Galla loanwords:

farda	- Galla for horse, here meaning slave possessed by a zar; "färäs", Amharic for horse, is taboo.
waqiyē yemmäsgän	- Waq is Galla for "God", yemmasgan is Amharic for "be praised." Total means: thank you.

There are also Woyṭo loanwords.

It is natural that an argot of a professional language should borrow expressions from another language with which it comes in contact....The (zar) belief might have originated with the autochthonous population of Ethiopia - the Woyto probably belong to this population - and the Amhara might have taken it over from them together with some expressions....."

x794 198 One might add to these conclusions by Dr. Leslau that in recent years Arabic loanwords are increasingly being used in the zar argot, perhaps due to the improvement of trade routes to the Sudan. Also, the poet who must compose somewhat new poetry for special occasions in the zar cult, is the prime agent for the introduction of Arabic loanwords and usages such as addressing a powerful make zar spirit as "Prophet" (in imitation of Muslim usage).

x794 171 174 Problems of the distribution of the "zar" and simlar cults in Africa and the Middle East, such as questions as to the origin and the diffusion of the cult, are more difficult and complex.

Some linguists believe that the term "zar" is of Cushitic origin (Dr. Leslau, would seem to agree with this). This would antedate the x 794 171 174 Hadramauti (South Arabian) colonization of Abyssinia about 2500 years ago. According to this view, the term is derived from the supreme divinity of the "pagan" Cushites, the God-heaven called "Jar" (pronounced djar) in Agau, the old-Cushitic language of Western Ethiopia [104].

The term for the zar ceremony, "wädaja" (lit. love feast) evidently is derived from the Amharic stem "wäddädä" (lit. he loved; to love), unless one concludes that both Amhara and Galla peoples derive the concept from an ancient, common Cushitic origin, the opinion of Dr. Michel Leiris [105].

The bulk of evidence would indicate a "Cushitic" origin for the zar cult. Indeed, the distribution of it and closely related cults is found most intensely in the geographical areas in which Cushitic is spoken.

[114] Among the Cushitic-speaking Galla tribes of southern Ethiopia, Dr. Cerulli [106] found a cult of worship of similar "nature spirits", upon which the God of the conquering Abyssinians was placed later, and he infers that the same happened to the one-time sky-god of the Agau, pre-Semitic inhabitants of Cushitic-speaking northern Ethiopia. As a result, when northern Ethiopia became Christianized, the "zar", the former sky god, was demoted to a possessive spirit. Diffusion of the zar cult, Dr. Cerulli believes, was then carried by Abyssinian slaves into the Arab countries such as Egypt, the Hidjas of Arabia and Oman, where the zar cult survives under its original name, "zar" or "sar".

[104] Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People Possessed by a Spirit; also Cerulli; "Zar" in Encyclopedia of Islam, 1933, p. 1217

[105] Leiris, M: L'Afrique Fantôme. Paris 1934, pp. 336-7, 440.

[106] Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol 2, p. 35

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Cerulli differentiates the "zar" cult from other beliefs in possession by genies found, eg. in the "buri" cult of Nigeria and Tripolitania, and the "amok" of Malaya, which do not have the Abyssinian idea that the zar can be forced to go out of the body of the possessed through the performance of a special rite. 107

Even earlier students of the zar cult among the Galla reported many phenomena identical to zar "worship" among the Amhara, as well as significant differences in detail. The Galla have a stronger element of worship in sacred groves than do the Amhara, who prefer the incense-filled hut as the center for public possession, diagnosis, treatment and social life. Emphasis on groves is also found in northern Ethiopia, among the Cushitic - speaking Qemants. Such grove worship venerates sycamore trees most often, but also junipers. Cotton thread, food, clothes and honey is offerred to them. Among the Yeju tribe of Galla, the Protestant missionaries Isenberg and Krapf observed the following in the mid-19th century:

> "They pay great respect to certain trees.... My people, desiring to sit down under its shadow, were immediately driven away, lest the Adbar should be angry (zar). Adbar means keeper or watchman. They grease this tree, and perform religious ceremonies under it. Nobody dare touch or damage the tree without risking a severe punishment....." 108

The Galla of Harar province, in the 20th century, call their chief religious worship "wadaja" (the same term as the Amhara in the zar cult), described by the Catholic missionaries Azais and Chambard 109).

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107. Cerulli, E.: Zar (in) Encyclopedia of Islam 1908, p. 1217

108. Isenberg, Krapf: Journals 1843, p. 439-440.

109. Azais & Chambard: 5 Années de Recherches Archéologiques en Etiopie. Paris, 1931, pp. 109-112.

X-774 171 It is a family or communal prayer-gathering which is accompanied by a feast of bread or roasted coffee and corn, beer or hydromel, a portion of which is offerred to Waqa, the sky-god. Often a sheep is sacrificed. The term "wadaja" is also used by the Wollo and Raya tribes of Galla for their "Islamic evening prayer".

[114] The cult among Islamized Galla was witness by another observer:

> "The Muslim sorcerers have their own 'society'. If anyone wishes to obtain a favor or draw down a curse upon his enemies, he invites several old men of the village, buys them Kat (note: the drugleaf chat, or qat) and passes the whole night with them singing, praying and cursing if it is an enemy, or blessing if it is a question of benediction. This is called making wadaja. The interested party seats himself in the middle of the kabiras who spit kat on his head, crying "yaklum" - "may it be fulfilled." (Note: compare with "yehun" of Amhara). In general, the wadaja lasts the whole night"...... 110

Southeast of Galla territory, among the Somali people, Dr. Cerulli observed "ceremonies intended to procure the incarnation of the genius to force the evil spirit to enter the bodies of initiated persons" 111

In the eastern lowland of Ethiopia, among the Afar people (also called Danakil), Dr. Thesiger observed the following:

[114]

> "The 'Afar Asa Mara, who unlike the Somali do not have a wide range of dances, perform an oracle dance called the jenile. The jenile, who may be man or woman, is an ordinary member of the community who is able to fall into a trance and deliver oracles. For its performance the men form a close circle and chant and clap their hands until the jenile, who is seated nearby covered with a shamma, enters the circle. Then the dancers, without moving their feet, bend forward chanting faster and faster until the jenile in a trance answers their questions......"
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> "The southern Afar localize a spirit on Mount Ayelu, an isolated volcano in the south of Afar land dominating Badhu. On its summit is a rectangular walled enclosure which they visit on pilgrimage after the rains, sacrificing sheep, and pray for the fertility of their animals and success in war...." 112

110. Zervos A: L'Empire d'Ethiopie. 1935. p. 93
111. Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol. 2 p.35
112. Thesiger, W.G.: The Awash River and the Aussa Sultanate. Geographical Journal. Vol. 85, 1935. p. 8.

x794 171 The same observer reports that the silver baton of the former Sultan of Aussa in this area was regarded as a magical object, enshrined, and confided to enboys on special missions. (Note Ber Alänga on zar list of Amhara).

x794 177 171 Diffusion of the zar cult from these areas to neighboring lands is the general consensus of most scholars who have occupied themselves with the problem. This would center the origin of the zar cult in Ethiopia. The name itself was noted among the Islamized Somali by Cerulli:

[114]

> "As a remainder of paganism may be regarded the ceremony of the zar, perhaps an ancient sacred dance. Natives crown in a circle and the chorus begins to sing on a special rythm. One or many among the singers fall fainting away to the ground. The others "beat the zar" by singing and striking the hands or clattering with the feet or striking drums or kettle drums. Then the person who has fainted rises little by little from the ground, takes in his hands a dagger, and dances in the circle with the dagger drawn out, til he falls again in a faint; but immediately rises fully recovered, The zar is danced also with a burning brand instead of the dagger; among the Sab the dancer goes out of the circle, runs in the jungle nearby and then comes back showing with loud cries his dagger sprinkled with blood of the genius he has killed..." 113

x794 171 Diffusion of the zar cult into the Sudan from Abyssinia is concluded by Trimmingham in his recent book "Islam in the Sudan".

114 What seems to be a form of the zar cult was observed among the Swahili of coastal East Africa, where it was called "Ngoma ya Pepo", according to Skene. 114

In predominantly Islamic areas, it seems that the zar is classified as an evil spirit, similar to the jinn. This is the how orthodox Muslims are enjoined to regard all pre-Islamic "pagan" deities, according to the Quran, (Sura 37, verse 158).

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113. Cerulli: Somali, Encyclop. of Islam 1908, p. 487
114. Skene: Arab and Swahili Dances. Journal of the Royal Anthrop. Instit., 1917, pp. 420-434.

x794 171 114 In the Hidjaz, the zar cult was observed by the scholar Hurgronje. He noted that it was especially widely diffused among women of Mecca and other towns, the same pattern as in Egypt. The woman chief who conducted the ceremonies held the title "shekha", and attempted to ascertain the nationality of the zar by questioning him either in "vulgar Arabic" or in "zar language" known only to initiated persons.[115] (Note the close similarity to the female doctor - dominated zar cult, and similar procedure of diagnosis and zar language as among the Amhara!).

In the Oman, Cerulli believes the zar arrived carried by slaves imported from Ethiopia. There the spirit is referred to in the plural, "ziran". [116]

In Egypt, many observers in the 19th century and up to the present time have reported zar ceremonies. Kahle, observing it there almost half a century ago, concluded that the cult had arrived in Egypt, by distribution from Abyssinia, for the following reasons:

(1) Because the Amharic name "zar" had carried over;

(2) because of the exorcistic character of some of the ceremonies;

(3) because of the history of its spread in the 19th century when contact between Abyssinia and Egypt became much closer;

(4) because the ceremonies are conducted by a woman.

He reported that this woman was called "sheikha" or "'arifa alsikka", and that she treated each spirit differently according to his place of origin, sometimes from Upper Egypt, sometimes from Lower Egypt, the Sudan, etc. In this differentiated treatment she was careful to use

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[115] Hourgronje, S: Mekka. 1889, Vol. 2, p. 124-8

[116] Cerulli: Zar. Encyclopedia of Islam, 1908, p. 1218

x [illegible] the proper melody, song, individual clothing required by the zar. The
171 chants were accompanied by small drums and by dances. A sacrifice of
114 fowl was usually offerred. The ceremonies lasted sometimes many nights in succession.[117]

In 1890, pamplets condemning the zar cult were printed in Cairo. They complained that the ceremonies "speculate on the ignorance and stupidity of the women of Cairo"; "the dangerous spreading of this lucrative swindle and the concern this is causing noble-minded and intelligent menfolk". Letters were cited that had been written to the editors of Cairo newspapers, quoting the Quran in protest against the zar cult, and stating that the zar cult "celebrates his triumphs especially in the houses of the richest, socially most prominent Turkish families residing in Cairo". One modern-educated, sophisticated and worried Egyptian even sent his wife to a zar ceremony to study the details of it, at the suggestion of a German scholar named Vollers, who then published a brief description in the original Arabic. In the cult, the term"minzar" was used to indicate a woman posessed by the zar, and the term was increasingly used for epileptic attacks, the sufferers of which were being taken to the zar ceremonies.[118]

It would be interesting to make a study of the influence of the zar cult on Islamic societies, perhaps along the lines indicated in Zwemer's "Influence of Animism on Islam"[119]. Such a study would be obverse to Joseph Greenberg's "Influence of Islam on a SudaneseReligion".[120]

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117. Kahle, Paul: Zar Beschwörungen in Egypten. Der Islam, III, 1912, p. 1-41, 189-190.

118. Littman, Enno: Arabische Geisterbeschwörungen Aus Egypten (Zar). Leipzig, 1950.

118. Vollers, Karl: Noch einmal der Zar. Zeitschrift Deutsch. Morgenl. Ges, 45, Leipzig, 1891, pp. 343-351
Walker, J: Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt. London 1934, p. 64-7

119. Zwemer, S.M.: The Influence of Animism on Islam. 1920.

120. Greenberg, J.: Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion. New York, 1947

754
B. Evil-Eye Sickness ("Buda") and its Healing.

776 Even "zar" spirits are considered vulnerable to the evil-eye sickness, the most feared of all ailments. The human patient must either be cured or will die. The evil spirits, collectively named "buda" - though that name is taboo - are never benign, and must be exorcised. Buda possessions are less common than "zar". The most common method of the "evil-eye buda is to "drink the blood" of his victim, magically, so that he will slowly waste away. The buda spirit does this by draining the victim through the magic power of the evil eye.

a) Basic Concepts of "buda".

"Buda" is the personification of the evil eye, a concept that includes the evil spirit itself; the sorcerer, regarded as most commonly a male member of the professional, ethnic ironsmith caste passing on the power of the evil eye from generation to generation; and the "magical hyena" which serves the sorcerer as his favorite "horse", but into which he can also change himself at night. The hyena is, of course, the most typical and most active night-animal, and its habit of digging into fresh graves to consume the corpses, which can be observed almost daily, seems to confirm the connection in the Amhara mind.

[171] The foreign observer is reminded of the similarity to the werewolf concept of medieval Europe, which was also regarded as personified in some ethnic minority; and the common evil-eye concept still casting fear all over the Middle East.[121]

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[121] Eisler, R.: Man into Wolf. London 1951
Jaussen, J.A.: Le Mauvais Oeil. Revue Biblique, 33, Paris 1924, pp. 396-407

754 776 [784] The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (aynä ṭela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällabi"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

754 609 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution, lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "ṭabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

754 776 [609] The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers [854] [164] hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

754 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the
776 buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors
[753] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always
known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared
even by the bravest warriors.

754 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the
776 central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply
178 expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in
the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has
developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed
to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in
their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess
and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are
regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him".
Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season.
[821] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when
tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the
roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and
cannibalize them.

751 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at
754 least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the
776 centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too
happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or
of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed
word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very
vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through
the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time
Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering
the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the
toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in
strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out
buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The
most commonly used of these herbs is "ṭena adam" (lit. health of
Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered.
In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me".
Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children
are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby
unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly
used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates
consumption.

751 Typhus ("tälalafi bäsheta") and severe epilepsy ("yäbuda bäsheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and
staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure
to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this
observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga
and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of
strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their
cosmology.

000 strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.
776 Certain districts are regarded as "breeding places" of the buda;
754 the entire province of Gojjam is so regarded by Amhara of Gondar and other areas. The "buda" spirits are believed to have their headquarters in Gojjam, their schools where they study techniques of finding and trapping victims, and new methods to resist interrogation by the exorcists who try to induce the "buda" to reveal his name, i.e. that of the human sorcerer through whose body the "buda" makes contact and "eats" (sometimes through initiative of the buda, sometimes called through the ill-will of the sorcerer for a certain human victim). The people of Gojjam (even the Amhara there!) are considered "educated" buda, more sophisticated and less crude, but more dangerous because more clever (note: equivalent to "Jerusalem-educated" zar!). The Gojjam "buda" can "eat" even at long idstance, and are not hampered by the dimension of time. Thus, a visitor from Gojjam who has been offended (e.g. by not having been offerred a seat or a drink or by having been refused hospitality) on his return home, months later, may "eat" the offender at long distance. Even years and oceans can be crossed by a sufficiently "educated" buda; even the foreigner, years later and across the sea, may be affected, according to Amhara belief.

In the Galla provinces, the "buda" are believed by the Amhara to be crude and uneducated. The Amhara does not fear the Galla on this score, as much as he would fear a strange Amhara from Gojjam or a Falasha ironsmith. But the "buda" of Galla areas are believed to turn themselves into hyenas at night and to eat corpses of humans more often; and if they capture a live Amhara stranger, force him to remain as a servant, drugged (like a zombie)/

776 754 The same "methods" are ascribed to Falasha ironsmiths who live in their own hamlets in the Amhara regions. The Falasha, who are regarded as having some secret "education" of their own (actually Mosaic Judaism), are believed to be able to turn a victim into a donkey and make him do a donkey's work, then turn him back to a human in their own hamlet, and make him do a servant's work. In case rescue nears, the Falashas are believed to be able to turn him into one of the many large pots that always lie about a Falasha hamlet where the women make pottery for sale.

Thus the buda complex contains many facets: medical-regional-ecological (Gojjam's Blue Nile is a major caravan route that can bring infectious diseases) - ethnic - religious - Middle Eastern evil eye complex - African fear of the ironsmith. All this is fitted into the Amhara cosmology of the supernatural.

Though closely interconnected in the Amhara mind, some of these facets will be considered in separate detail.

754 b. Symptoms of "buda" disease.

158 The classic symptoms of "buda" disease follow the following sequence. The victim, usually a young woman between the age of 15 and 30, complains of utter fatigue and a heavy head. An hour or so later, she breaks out in hysterical frenzy, wild laughter, stares with wild, empty eyes, moves about restlessly as if driven by some inner demon. An hour or so later, she complains of intestinal cramps, and cringes under the violence of the pain. Her fingers are clenched so that the thumbs are not visible - (regarded as sure sign of the "buda"). For, it is believed, her thumbs have been grasped by the buda that is eating her and he won't let anyone else see them lest his "food" be taken from him. This is called "tänäbbäzä", stolen by force, for the buda is robbing the victim

754 158 of her blood, her health, life itself. The eyes of the victim are glazed, the nostrils distended, the face may wear a ghastly smile, and the body may be inflexible, or else in a nervous tremor. Relatives and "bread-companions" become terrified and run to the exorciser, often a dabtara, bringing him a gift called "ageba" (lit. entrance, i.e. visiting fee). By the time he arrives, the victim may be in contortions on the ground - being eaten by the buda. Some patients may try to hurt themselves, though others do not. When restrained, the patient may fight against the restraint, and women patients bite and scratch the restrainers.

Another classic case is total apathy, refusal to eat, and resistance even to the zar doctor, followed by sudden revival at night and the urge to run out and roam with the hyenas. Zar doctors explain this as a "zar being attached by a buda". An exorciser is then called in.

A common symptom of less violent character is nosebleed, which is very common. Persons vulnerable to this take care to [824] stuff smelly plants into the nose when on the trail. Such protective plants are collectively called "yäbuda reyan" (smells against the buda).

[851] Boys, when hazing the children of an ironsmith or suspected sorcerer sometimes force garlic ("chequn") into the nose of the child with such force as to cause nosebleed, saying "now give up the blood you have stolen". 754 824 Garlic is believed to have the power to stop a buda and is therefore buried under the door of a suspected sorcerer, e.g. an itinerant smith travelling his circuit of customers; this is believed toprevent the buda from going out at night "to feed".

754 [164] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis") is regarded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "mäggäñä". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of dabtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same dabtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. [825] When a cow gradually stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

e. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

55 latter tries to evade, first through deliverate misinformation, then by removing himself physically. He does this by calming his victim, who says that there is nothing wrong with him, that he merely wants to go out a moment. But everyone knows this is just to lure the victim outside, make him stumble in the darkness and, brought to a fall, devour him at leisure. Consequently, the patient is tied up "to prevent escape of the buda". But every time a hyena howls, the patient tries to break loose to join his "brethren".

Forceful means in the diagnosis may include nearly choking the patient to put pressure on the buda to reveal himself or risk the premature death of his victim. A smoky fire is made of mule dung, the patient is held over it, togas are piled on top of him to prevent the smoke from dissipating. Naturally, the patient begins to choke and cough, but he is not released until he begs cessation of this ordeal with Christian formulae such as "sela Maryam" (for Mary's sake). This indicates that the buda is surrendering and ready to cooperate. To quelch the spirit even more, strong herbs are smelled and the exorciser may insult the buda in the most vulgar and obscene terms. This rattles the buda ("aaläffāläfä", lit. he talked disconnected nonsense), so that he cannot develop a defensive strategy. Finally, at the threat of further punishment, the buda gives a name.

The treatment consists of negotiation to cast the buda out entirely. The buda is asked what his demands are. The first request is usually something very difficult to obtain, or something very filthy, e.g. "food" consisting of dung of donkey or even hyena.

755 Serious cases sometimes evidence utter self-abasement, but this impresses the audience as a sign of a genuine, sincere case. Finally, the exorciser negotiates a date at which the buda will leave, usually not more than a week later. Unlike the zar, the buda is made to swear that he will not return.

The next step in treatment is to make certain that the buda [782] will not return. Often the sacrifice of a black chicken is made. the animal, still alive, is turned around the head of the victim, until the greedy buda enters the body of the chicken. Then the chicken is rapidly smashed to the ground. If it dies at once, it is a good omen that the buda has accepted the transfer, the substitute, and is leaving. Another good omen is the release of the exorciser is a dabtara, he says:

> "I command you, buda, in the name of the holy Trinity, the 12 apostles and the 318 bishops of the Council (of Nicea) to leave this person".

If the buda responds, he leaves with a flourish, such as showing his strength for the last time by causing his victim to pick up a huge rock, which would normally take several men to lift; then leaving the victim in a faint. To scare the buda further off, rifles may be discharged at this time. Often the patient is beaten severely, even wounded in the hip with a spear, "to let the buda escape"; this also makes things unpleasant and prevents a renewed attack.

When the victim recovers from his faint, he is asked his name, and gives his usual name. This is proof that he is "himself again". He claims to have no memory of what went on during the attack. As further proof of recovery the patient may be asked to pronounce

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

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789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulae as "besem Aw, Wold, M'änfäs Ceddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulae in Amharic, Geez, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "mämhēr" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the mämhēr. Another advantage of their amulets is that the mamher are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

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754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zawditu Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

159 two children, both beyond the infant stage. She lived in one of
754 the typical town structures of wooden posts, hard-mud walls, dirt floor, and corrugated iron roof.

During the night when she was first "struck", she screamed that she was being eaten by a buda. She howled like a hyena and wanted to run outside. Her husband and neighbors tied her up and feared that she was going to die. She threw herself on the ground and seemed in great inner pain. Her husband ran to the Addis Alam section, in the middle of the night, despite curfew and dangers, to fetch the woggesha doctor, to obtain strong smelling herbs. The woggesha came as soon as dawn arrived, for he had had some experience with buda cases. The woman patient spoke with a convincing male voice. Finally she revealed the name of the sorcerer who had placed the spell on her. She accused an Arab merchent, one of several who operated permanent stalls at the daily market. She exclaimed: "I am Abdulla Abdul Hijazi". She (correctly) identified his residence as the 3rd shop from the left corner". She boasted, still in male voice: "I am drinking her blood with my golden teeth".

As it turned out, there was indeed an Arab merchant by that name at that location, who had his two incisors capped with gold crowns, a rarity so far inland where no dentist offices existed, but common enough on the coast among Arabs of means.

The day before the attack, the woman had been shopping for sandals at this Arab's shop and several others, but had made no purchase since the prices were too high for her.

Once the patient had revealed the identity of the sorcerer, she was untied. Early in the morning the husband and his brother set out to look for the accused Arab, located his place, but could

159 754 not find him. They vowed to waylay him some night and beat him bloody, but bystanders felt that they would cool their tempers and perhaps try to get the merchant into trouble with the local police by planting stolen goods on him - a common procedure, in the towns.

Later the same day, the Arab merchant was conducting business as usual. The rumor did not seem to have hurt him, but local grapevine had it that husbands would restrain their wives from shopping there, though they would risk sending servants. Abdulla had nothing devilish about him, except the distinguishing mark of the capped incisors. He was medium-sized, slender, calm, without any stare that might have frightened the woman. His goods were the usual town goods, ranging from imported eyeglasses to notebooks for school children, and cheap beads.

By this time the woman patient was seated on the dirt floor of her house, looking tired, worn out and dejected. She had no longer a headache, of which she had complained, but claimed to have "heartache" and swelling of the left breast. A neighboring woman was brewing coffee. Her husband's brother, who was also present, [124] asked my advice. I gave him some aspirin for her. She forgot her apathy for a moment and gratefully and politely nodded. Later she refused to take that strange medicine of the foreigner.

d. Ethnic Caste under Suspicion of Sorcery

754 563 The Falasha ethno-religious group has been described in connection with the division of labor, for they are the ironsmiths and potters in the Amhara regions, especially in the province of Begemdir (Gondar).

754 563 The Amhara belief in buda has been very troublesome for the Falashas, for they are believed to have inherited the practice of sorcery from their fathers along with the craft of ironsmithing. Thus, the Falashas are blamed for individual cases of magical "eating" as well as for epidemics. Such accusations have repeatedly led to "sorcerer-killings". When an Amhara patient dreams that a certain Falasha is "eating" him, he sometimes gathers his kinfolk for a sudden attack on a Falasha hamlet, demanding that the particular "sorcerer" be handed over to them. In 1936, when the country was in turmoil following the Italian invasion, Falashas of one district were so plagued by buda persecutions that they evacuated their hamlets there and moved closer to the town of Gondar, though keeping a half day's distance from the town itself in line with their tradition of self-segregation(based on their religious particularism). Even now Falashas in their hamlets keep loaded rifles handy all night.

326 563 What happens when a non-Falasha learns the trade of ironsmithing, e.g. a Guragē, which happens near Addis Ababa where no Falasha hamlets exist? He dies not become a "kayla" (ironsmith; this term is considered insulting); he is not regarded as a potential buda, because he has not inherited the trade. But, his handiwork is suspect as "unprofessional"! It is called "yärāga sera" (work of a "räga", unprofessional), which indicates that his customers are likely to hold a low opinion of the quality of his product and the endurance of his tools in those areas where Falasha-made articles are readily available. The latter is not true where no Falasha hamlets exist, so that Gurage work is appreciated near Addis Ababa.

563 754 797 326 What happens when a Falasha gives up his Judaic religion and converts to Christianity? Does that free him from being suspected of buda? Only to a slight degree, for his Amhara neighbors refuse to forget his ancestry. In case of conversion, the Falasha becomes an outcast from his own people and usually moves to town. Only an ex-slave or a very poor Coptic woman will marry him. In the latter case, his in-laws believe that his kinship ties are still stronger than his new religion. Thus, if they have him teach them his ironsmithing trade, they believe he will not teach it properly to his affinal relatives. He can never become deacon or priest.

The buda-ironsmithing syndrome of the kayla seems based, in the Amhara mind, on the idea that a very strong power, namely the evil eye spirit, is necessary to accomplish sound work in ironsmithing. To remain powerful, the buda-ironsmith is regarded by the Amhara as requiring blood from time to time, otherwise his product, the iron plowpoint, will not stand wear and tear and the spear will break.

What happens to a Falasha who gives up his kayla trade? The stigma will remain on him, where his family is known. Therefore, some Falashas have migrated and tried to change their trade. This avoidance has not helped at all as long as they remain Falasha in religion. Those who have taken the step of conversion (e.g. as result of Protestant missionary activity in the lat 19th century) are still whispered about as Falashas by their Amhara neighbors and their social and marital associations are largely limited to other ex-Falasha, ex-ironsmith people. Assimilation has not solved the problem of ridding themselves of buda suspicion by the Coptic Amhara, though it has reduced direct, individual accusations of sorcery.

578 689 In the new courts established by the central government in the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 754 563 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda - Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despicing of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces of the supernatural. [171] This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 793 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

158 [759] Sometimes cases of buda possession are brought in to the government hospital at Gondar where two European physicians are in charge. They have diagnosed the shrieking, wildly beating type of case as "hysteria"; and the apathetic type of buda case as "catalepsy". In the latter case they have observed absence of reflex responses on eye and knee, almost no pulse, faint heartbeat, low blood pressure; sometimes a stupor in which the patient has no control over bowel movements and urinating. In severe cases of this kind there is a suspension of sensation and will, and muscles are so rigid that limbs keep any position they are placed in by the doctor.

755 In one memorable case, a hysteria patient, a man, had been gradually quieted by a Coptic Amhara priest called in by the European doctors at the hospital, who knew the effectiveness of this from past experience. All the priest had done was to hold the hand of the patient and quietly recite prayers in the Geez language, (which the lay patient could not understand). When the priest tired of this, the regular hospital priest was called in to continue this "treatment". But at sunrise the next morning the patient had disappeared out the window. The hospital "dressers" (male, semi-trained nurses) explained that the patient probably would go a long distance from this area, to escape the severe beating his kinfolk would give him - the "post-operative" treatment meted out to patients recovering from buda possession to "discourage the buda from returning".

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756 In the rural areas the "ṭänqway" is still sometimes called in to treat buda cases, though this is not his major specialty. He is what has been called a "witch-doctor", professional sorcerer, and diviner. He usually treats the patient by frightening the

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural 756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the ṭänqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually [689] cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "ṭänqway" as a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable däbtära and also the woggesha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyēn") and the diviner ("ṭänqway")

756 776 While the aforementioned ṭänqway is, or used to be, called in occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyēn" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the ṭänqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 777 The major principle of both the ṭänqway diviner and the ganyēn spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyēn, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

776 177 It is therefore likely that the ganyēn idea was brought to the Abyssinian highlands from Southern Arabia about 500 B.C., superimposed on the earlier "buda" and "zar" beliefs, but reduced to the bottom scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.[122]

776 The ganyēn are considered by the Amhara wholly evil. In personality they are choleric, male quickly aroused to aggressive rage. They are believed to be of dark complexion. They are so tough "they can eat stones". They attack men far more often than women and in daylight rather than at night, (exact opposite of the zar). They cause neither hysteria nor apathy, rather they cause their victim to run amok.

682 754 As a result, the legal significance of the ganyēn possession in Amhara society is considerable. Almost every apprehended murderer claims that the ganyen "pushed his hand". He thus "was not himself". In the old tradition, if evidence for actual ganyen possession was deemed sufficient, the excuse brough sufficient mitigation so that the kin of the murdered individual could accept blood-money from the murderer and his kin without a blood-feud and without losing prestige. In such a case, the priest-confessor or "mänfäs gubaē, acting as intermediary, would go to the bereaved kin and beg forgiveness for the crime. If they agreed, the "danya" (judge) would set the "semanya", (the amount of blood-money); formerly a minimum of 80 Maria-Theresa Thalers (now Eth$1000 = US $4000)[1a] It is noteworthy that this tradition is so strong that even the modern Ethiopian court in Addis Ababa often sets the damages for

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[122] See MacDonald, D.D.: "Djinn", (in) Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 1045-1046, and Trimmingham: Islam in Ethiopia, p. 260.

[1a] [valuation given here is not in agreement with that given elsewhere — probably should read "US $410)." — Analyst]

682 754 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyēn yazä" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with [278] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the ṭänqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 756 789 In his role as magician, the ṭänqway is called "qumäña" (from "qomä", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder), [761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the ṭänqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.
[776]

755 After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
776 ganyen, the ṭänqway tries to exorcise the demon by treating him with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar"). Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift), the ganyēn - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast. The ṭänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyēn somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyēn, the major activity
[787] of the ṭänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not polite to use the term "ṭänqway" in his presence, instead he is politely addressed as "awaqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed considerable;
[694] but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diagnosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells (zagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read additional information from their driection and mutual position.

756 His clientele in this role consists largely of women, who often come to him with petty problems, whom he can charge little for his services, but who provide him with a regular, though modest, income. A ṭänqway, unlike zar doctor or dabtara, never becomes rich. Also, both peasant women and townswomen go to him to have their personal fortunes told. He sympathizes with them in their marital quarrels, encourages them to be disobedient to their husbands and to bring him money and gifts withheld from the husband. Consequently, men consider the ṭänqway a wrecker of marriage, and so does the church. The proverb says:

[539] "Lying ṭänqway,
the house he destroys".

Men do consult him on the occasion of stolen property, but are ashamed to be seen going to his house. They go secretly.

There is a significant element of competition between the ṭänqway and the däbtära, though the latter is considered far superior, "educated", and is now actually driving the ṭänqway out of much of his business.

In the popular Amhara mind, the ṭänqway is regarded as fearful of the däbtära. For the latter can undo the success of the former through magic formulae written in Geez, copies from secret Geez books. With such a formula, the däbtära can go to the river, call the ganyēn water-spirits and instruct them to steal the "bag of tricks" of the ṭänqway, or to refuse to come when called by the ṭänqway. The dabtara disdains to use the bag of tricks, regarded as primitive and when he captures it will destroy it. Conversely, if a dabtara has "charmed" a thief by giving him a specially written amulet against capture by the police, nothing the tanqway can do

756 will trace the thief or the stolen goods. Also, the active intercession for a better future, which the dabtara can achieve to some extent by appealing to saints and angels whose secret names he knows from his books in Geez, is considered far superior to the mere fortune-telling of the ṭänqway.

D. The Scribe (dăbtăra) as Healer

795 a. Summing up the position of the dăbtära

756 In many ways the social position and activities of the dabtara symbolize the syncretic character of Amhara culture. His official function is that of semi-lay staff of the Coptic Abyssinian church. He serves as scribe, chorister, translator from Geez to Amharic; the church could not do without him. His official rewards are meager, mostly a parceling out of what the priests receive. Thus his major income comes from his unofficial, extracurricular activities as healer. The copyist of church works logically becomes the writer of amulets. This brings him in touch with the cosmology of supernatural spirits, some of which are considered in the realm of zar, buda, ganyēn and with doctors ranging from the empiricist woggesha to the exorciser-sorcerer ṭänqway. It may seem surprising that there is not more competition between these specialist. The fact is that the dăbtära, enjoying the greatest respectability among healers because of his association with the church, can afford to be and is generous to all except the ṭänqway, and in fact enjoys his position as uncrowned hing of healers. He is the only healer, apart from the empiricist-surgeon "woggesha", to whose house men clients and patients walk publicly in broad daylight without fearing loss of prestige.

795 756 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq säw), but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the däbtära has been described in relation to sex).

[539]

> "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
> of men, the worst is the däbtära".

[574] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parceling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 756 874 The däbtära learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he must be "aṭṭenṭam" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a. däbtära-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for fear a student might stumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 756 [169] There is even one priestly function which the däbtära occasionally carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptize a patient victimized by ganyen, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

795 Some däbtära have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his
reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine),
[386] rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually made of soot, charcoat, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre-
[776] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George
[567] killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

773 789 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susneyos learned that Werzelya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susneyos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susneyos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 753 755 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon diseases treated by amulets:

(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons. Amulets are collectively referred to as "ketab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

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Table 13: The Scribe as Healer: Demons, their Individual Specialties, Exorcism.

category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Buda"	evil eye	fevers (mech mättaw); functional ailments; hysteria, catalepsy	eye with bloody-red iris; iron-smith ethnics		powerful amulet; Christian re-baptising of patient: exorcism
(1)	"Mägañä"	threshhold demon in early mourning	spitting blood (tuberculosis) through "red snake in belly". Amebic dysentery.		Buda	amulet of St. Sebastian as prophylactic smoke of "wogärt" plant which snake hates, in hut. Carry dead through hole in wall (in Gojjam), so demon cannot find way back to infect others in family. Spraying with holy water.
(1)	"Dängara Mäṭal"	household demon	infectious disease, highly contageous within hut. (Endangers travellers.)			amulet as prophylactic. Lure demon out of the hut through trail of chicken feathers, lemons and perfume, onto trail, where it is transferred to travellers.
(1)	"Nädara", "Aynät"	evil eye, female demon	eye diseases, esp. ophthalmia	red eyes	Buda	amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of this demon

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and dounteracting principle
(1)	"Aynä Ṭɛla" (lit. Shadow Eye)	evil eye, female demon	blocks projects; blocks learning of students; causes sleepwalking; likes to attack men. Confuses protective zar spirits so they cannot help.		Zar	amulet "temhertä hebuat". intoxicant plant "esǩ fare" (see Zar).
(1)	"Eqabē Seray"	evil eye, male demon	Various mischief; can turn himself into human figure	Non-Copt neighbors; Barya, iron-smith ethnics	Buda	Christian amulet.
(1)	"Dabbas"	Household demon	undefined illness and death; "aroused when thirsty"			Christian amulet.
(2)	"Barya"	dancing demons; their chief "Legōwon" has red eyes and is "buda"	epilepsy, haut mal ("ḥemama barya"), esp. in male victims.	Barya tribe of Nilotic lowlands. Symbol: tornado	Zar, Buda	Amulet with angel of fiery sword (Christian).
(2)	"Tegrida"	restless demon	epilepsy, petit mal; causes "falling-down sickness"			Christian amulet.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	affiliation of demon's; or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(3)	"Werzelya"	female demon	attacks women: barrenness through stopped menstruation which "prevents conception", 'yädam tefat); bleeding from uterus (menorrhagia); miscarriage.	Barya tribe negress		amulet with legend of her promise to Saint Susneyos. It is suspended from the Christian neckcord "mätäb".
(3)	"Karina"	female demon	attacks women who have just given birth (puerperal fever).			amulet recalling her defeat at the hands of King Solomon.
(3)	"Shotälay"	female demon, subordinate.	causes stillbirth		Zar	exorcism
(3)	"Tegerteya", "Teggerta", "Waddegeni"	female demon	attacks women after childbirth through puerperal fever or catalepsy (postnatal depression).		Zar, Buda	prophylactic amulet; quiet cooperation with Zar doctor who tries cajoling the spirit through the patient (See zar).

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c. Summary of the däbtära's syncretism in healing the spirit.

755 It is clear from the above that a number of ancient spirit cosmologies have contributed to, and survived in, Amhara healing practices: Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Arab, Christian, and African. In fact, the syncretism has been so complex, for so many centuries, that it would be impossible to trace all the roots, with any degree of valid certainty. However, several traces do stand out and their etiology bears significantly on present function.

The book "Lefafä Tsedeq" of the Coptic Abyssinian Church (lit. Book of Righteous Life, in Geez), contains spells and formulae attributed to Jesus Christ and Mary, but actually showing influences [764] from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead". Its function among the Amhara is entirely in the context of funerals and funeral mass during memorial services.

Much of the Greek-Byzantine influence may have entered directly at the time Abyssinia was christianized; but more came via Arabic, later. This includes patches of Greek mythology, legends in connection with the New Testament, and traces of the astrological work of claudius Ptolemy (about 150 A.D. in origin), known in the West as Almagest". [123]

Hebrew influence is most commonly encountered with reference to the mystic powers of King Solomon, who occupies about the same role in Amhara spirit cosmology as in Jewish mythology (Kabala). Amhara amulets refer, e.g. to the "fishnet of Solomon", in which he could catch demons as readily as a fisherman catches fish in the rainy season. The powers of archangels, e.g. Fenaēl, Gabriēl, etc., are very similar to Jewish cabalistic ideas. [124]

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123. See Strelcyn, S: Un magicien grec en Ethiopie. Journal Asiatique, 1951, p. 175-192

124. Walker, John: Folk Medicines in Modern Egypt. London 1934.

177 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed star of David) often
755 appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-
789 appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.) [125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 Abuna (bishop) Batra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (pro-
177 phylactic); St. George, "Qeddus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster
755 (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

[751] St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Magana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon.

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125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

177 776 Gäbre Mänfäs Ceddus (lit. Saint Servant-of-Soul), an Amhara saint from the province of Shoa, who was a saint from birth, and who, instead of dying the usual way, entered heaven in bodily shape.

Täklä Haymanot, the foremost Abyssinian saint, and an actual historical figure, An Amhara bishop from Shoa province, he lived in the 13th century and founded the still existing monaster of Dabra Libanos. He too is regarded as a saint from birth. His sacred spring at the monastery is regarded as powerful holy water, and those who cannot make the pilgrimage, as far as Addis Ababa (about 150 kilometers away), have water brought in Chianti bottles. The bones of important persons are sometimes unearthed and sent to rest under cave ledges at this monaster. Many austerities, miracles, conversions of heathons, and even temporary conversion of the devil himself are ascribed to him. On church paintings and amulets, Haymanot is depicted with one leg missing, lost during a martyrdom, but with wings which protected him from falling down the steep mountains of Abyssinia.

Tewodros (St. Theodor), regarded as the founder of the Abyssinian monastery of Dabra Maryam. But the name is also used as a synonym for another Messiah, who, according to a 14th century Abyssinian book "Feqqärä Iyasus" (lit. Love of Jesus) will some day come from the east, conquer the world, usher in a long period of peace and prosperity, preceding the final catastrophy. (Probably with this tradition in mind, the usurper Kassa had himself crowned Emperor Theodore, in 1855).

Jesus Christ himself is regarded as a powerful magician, more powerful than the powerful magicians Moses and Solomon, over animate as well as inanimate matter. The curative spells used by Jesus are

177 contained in the aforementioned book "Lefafä Tsedeq".

[776] African cosmology underlies much of this syncretism. Some is probably old-Cushitic, antedating the Geez-speakers. Some evidently has been carried into Ethiopia by the Galla. Caravan routes and the slave trade have long maintained contact with Central Africa, and some amulets resemble the "grisgris" of West Africa.[126]

756 [177] The däbtära thus has many tools and sources for his trade. He can use the books of the church, in Geez which he alone understands; saints, angels and martyrs; translated Arabic myths - including many of Graeco-Christian origin; cabalistic Hebrew cosmology; he can call on the mystical elements of nature: fire, water, earth, and air, without knowing that ancient system.

No wonder that some däbtära specialize and work out syncretic systems of their own. The more esoteric the source and the manner and atmosphere of writing, the more admiration and faith does it call forth. Some dabtara secretly cooperate with zar doctor colleagues. Some develop rituals of their own, such as writing amulets only on specified days of the week. Some go so far in their syncretism as to invite (secretly of course) a non-Copt, such as a Muslim or a Falasha, to write certain texts for him, on the amulets; or the interfaith colleagues exchange their handiwork! For the efficacy of the esoteric is regarded as double. Amulet-writers of the three faiths are curious about each other's magical powers, and while the ordinary individual will shun and fear such "comparative religion", the doctors feel protected sufficiently to risk such "free enterprise" contact.

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[126] See Lifacyz: Amulettes Ethiopiennes. Minotaur, Vol. 2, 1934, p. 71-73

776 174 797 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyēn"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised ṭänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 [182] Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[794 562] While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 754 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

[127] Tubiana, J: "Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954

[128] Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935

[129] Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

171/754 Amhara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Amhara, too, [554] no "telliaq säw" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Amhara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Amhara territory, is considerable.

177/755 Amhara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Amhara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Amhara peasant.

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[130] Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

PART VII: Concluding Observations about Amhara Culture and Society.

181

1. Predominant Ecological Characteristics: Peasant Folk Society.

Parts I and II of this study have shown how the Amhara people on the highland plateau of Northern Ethiopia utilize their generous physical environment to fulfill their ecological needs, with a minimum of tools and considerable reliance upon the ethnic division of labor.

Their ecology is primarily that of an agricultural peasantry. They share with peasants the world over certain near-universal characteristics, in the sense of Redfield's definition of a peasant as a person who controls land and practices agriculture as a way of life, not as a business for profit (footnote 131).

182 They also share certain characteristics of cultural integration with other folk societies. With regard to the latter, Kroeber remarks:

> "Folk societies .....belong to that group of societies which identify themselves with their locality, in contrast to the sophisticated city dwellers who float without roots but take pride in living in their era and day and are therefore subject to the play of fashion".
>
> (footnote 132)

This explains, at least in part, the strong regional emphasis, (down to small sub-districts) among the Amhara, indicated many times in this study.

The historian might approach analysis of Amhara culture by totalling its material and non-material traits. This might then appear to be an unbalanced conglomerate. But it seems supremely

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Footnote 131: Redfield, Robert: Peasant Society and Culture. 1956

Footnote 132: Kroeber: Anthropology. 1948. p. 282

182 coherent and integrated to the Amhara. Such a point of view is not unique, as has been pointed out by Kroeber:

> "...most of what is in any culture was produced outside of it, but the highly composite product nevertheless is regularly felt as something coherent and integrated, and normally accepted as 'right'.
> ...the average individual (is) so molded by it in growing up...that even incoherences and contraditions are taken for granted as if they were logically sound and a-priori evident...
> ...(He) accepts the surrounding atmosphere as a fish accepts water. What is 50 years old in this culture and what is 3000 years old touch him alike and affect him alike. So do elements that the culture originated and elements which were introduced into it."
> (footnote 133)

From a sociological point of view, one might describe Amhara society as "tradition-directed" in the terminology of David Riesman (footnote 134). Certainly their old norms are still intact. Even the recently "modern-educated" minority has not yet experienced "anomie".

2. How Amhara Culture functions in Amhara Society.

181 How Amhara culture fulfills the non-material needs of Amhara society, may be summarized under three headings: A. Ethos and major values; B. specific culture foci; C. summary of psychological considerations predominant in Amhara culture.

A. Ethos and Major Values: the Possessor and the Possessed.

Ethos and systems of values have been variously defined; e.g. "..the direction in which the culture is oriented...

"It is evident that the ethos of culture is pretty close to what

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Footnote 133: ibid, pp. 286-8.

Footnote 134: Riesman, David: The Lonely Crowd. 1950.

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> a philesopher or a historian might call its system of values...Values...might be informally defined as those things - cultural products, standards or ideas - which men living in societies prize and hold as having high importance, for them, for their group and decendants..."
> (footnote 135)

Amhara culture is oriented to maximum use of what nature provides, but not to alteration of nature. Even the spirit-healers, who enjoy a relative maximum of "free enterprise" in Amhara culture, merely try to understand nature, in order to adjust better to it, to come to terms with it. With great patience and complex rituals, they try to negotiate a reduction in the frequency of the disturbance, to convert a handicap into an asset. Even the power of the written word, personified in the "dabtara" scribe, attempts merely to manipulate what already exists in the natural or supernatural world, without changing any basic characteristics. No "zar" doctor would attempt to change a spirit that is wholly evil into a "protective" one.

The ecological reliance of the Amhara upon the ethnic division of labor is a complex that has been described in this study in context with material culture, Amhara ethnocentrism, and sorcery. Whatever the historical origins of this complex, it is a major characteristic of Amhara ethos. In the Amhara attitude toward the ironsmith, emotional involvement is clearly evident: fear - because the ironsmith who must have derived his amazing craft from evil supernatural forces and hence must be a sorcerer; and pride - that the Amhara is not himself performing such manual labor.

The result of these cultural orientations is an Amhara national

Footnote 135: Kroeber: Anthropology, 1948, pp. 293-295.

181 character that has self-assurance without self-reliance. The trade goods of the foreigner have been received for centuries without hesitation - almost as if they were tribute; but only members of the ethnic laboring groups (Guragē, Falasha women, etc.) evidence curiosity and initiative in reproducing some of the tools and utensils of the foreigner. The Amhara themselves are smugly content to remain consumers.

Amhara culture divides the social universe into two: master and servant; the possessor and the possessed. This dichotomy dominates ethnic relations, spiritual relations, etc. In their tradition of government, one is either a "great man" or at best a retainer. Nobles have often rebelled against Amhara kings - but only to be kings themselves, not to set up a Magna Charta.

This ethos is not discussed, not articulated by the Amhara themselves. However, there are several "culture foci" that the Amhara are aware of and discuss in certain contexts. These will be considered next.

B. Culture Foci: Land, Kin, Rustic vs. Noble, Government Hierarchy, Authoritarian Literalness, the Cultural Uses of Intelligence.

The concept "culture focus" is here used in the definition of Herskovits:

> "A people's dominant concern may be thought of as the focus of their culture; that area of activity or belief where the greatest awareness of form exists, the most discussion of values is heard, the widest difference in structure is to be discerned."
>
> (Footnote 136)

Among the Amhara, notable culture foci of this sort are found in their attachment to the land - not surprising in a peasant folk society;

Footnote 136: Herskovits, M.: (in Linton, The Science of Man in the World Crisis, 1945, pp. 164-5).

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara:
423 Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and
571 student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärey" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the in-
602 dividual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis
[591 on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal resi-
611] dence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("harerät")

181 602 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticized by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

[476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq säw"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balagär"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 554 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted, not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

157 554 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is [576] only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes, [152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 554 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble behaves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is 152 554 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even 157 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died) [304] when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll

152 on the ground, Amhara noblewomen weep silently or go into states
554 of apathy. This is a more common mental ailment among nobles than
158 hysteria, and may lead to chronic depression and even catalepsy (see Part VI).

157 However, both the peasant and the noble share certain common
554 Amhara personality characteristics. Both take great pride in being
186 able to "speak well in court". Homesickness is strong among both, and is very widespread. Kings and emperors, until very recently, had great difficulty in sending and keeping ambassadors abroad, for the diplomat regarded his foreign assignment as "exile". Both classes share great pride in their highland plateau, defended for many centuries against all comers. This national vanity is at least in part due to long ignorance of the world beyond (sometimes hardened into xenophobia); pride in their ancient religion and in the national epics like the Solomon-Sheba-Menelik. These are shared by Amhara of all classes.

829 Amhara concepts of government administration are aristocratic: ruled by the noble "great man", who is usually descended from a feudal warlord of past centuries. The military camp and its direct significance for traditional Amhara social structure and government has been described in Part III. At the top of the hierarchy is the king or emperor (King of Kings). At the Amhara grassroots is the peasant, who seeks justice by attaching himself to a "great man" as retainer, so that he too will be treated "with honor" by reflection. From the bottom to the top of the hierarchy of government, persons on every level perform the ceremony of "dāj tenat" (lit. waiting by the gate) to obtain jobs, maintain positions, or merely to prevent doubts about personal loyalty from arising through absence. This

829 pattern continues in full force even at present. As a result, the high official is as hesitant about delegating authority downward (which might build up a potential rival), as the inferior in the hierarchy fears to accept delegated authority (lest the superior repent of his grant and suspect rebellion). In consequence, daily problems, even routine ones, are regularly referred for decision to the superior in the hierarchy of government.

812 The authoritarian "literalness" which characterizes so many Amhara attitudes may at least in part be the effect of religious fundamentalism. Until recently, the "Fetha Nägäst" criminal and
[681] civil code was literally enforced, including the cutting off of hands for theft and of feet for rebellion. Biblical passages are interpreted literally, by the priests. In monasteries, the monks exclude the presence of even female animals such as cows.

[779] The church, sacerdotal in its concepts and rituals, does not feel that it owes an explanation to anyone; and "literalness" has remained unchallenged (except during the relatively brief Portuguese episode). In the Amhara view, there is a direct and unilateral connection between cause and effect, and paradoxes that result from such oversimplifications are ignored: e.g. the tallest obelisk at Aksum, which has fallen and broken into several large pieces, is claimed to have been "pushed" over by the Falasha Queen Judith, despite the fact that another, almost as tall, still stands nearby.
[682] Homicide, especially if accidental, is blamed on the "ganyēn" spirits who pushed the murderer's hand.

647 Literal obedience dominates the governmental administration, for no subordinate would arrogate to himself the privilege of "interpret" the spirit of the law handed down by the official of superior status.

000 status.

181 The Amhara concern with spirits seems motivated not by the
776 negative emotion of fear, but toward an understanding of the universe; toward healing; toward patterns of individual free enterprise under the guidance of protective spirits (regarded by the "_zar_" doctors and "_zar_" societies somewhat as patron saints).

181 Inventive intelligence, constrained in Amhara culture from
developing material objects, applies itself to nonmaterial culture
goals: to etiquette and other fine points of human relations; to
speaking well in court; witticisms and proverbs; to entertaining
with homiletic and riddles ranging from the ribald to the philo-
sophic; to the development of special argots for the professions
[871] of minstrelsy, medicine and commerce. Education is regarded by
they Amhara as a highly desirable means to (non-material) achievement. The desire to be regarded as intelligent is even greater than the profit motive, in Amhara culture; so that there is greater fear of being mocked at than being bested in a trade exchange. Producers would rather undersupply a market than risk having to carry any goods back home. The worst mockery and insult is to be regarded as intellectually inferior.

855 C. Some Psychological Consideration; arising from the Life Cycle.

Infancy and childhood, until adolescence, are years of free
experimentation for the young Amhara, years with a minimum of super-
vision by adults, and maximum exposure to training by the peer-
group and slightly older youngsters. The child does not live in a
world of giants, but learns to handle his (not very complex) universe
000 through the give-and-take of his age-mates. Until weaning, at the

854 [853] until weaning, at the age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After 857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as protecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds and baboons.

855 The pattern of punishment is dominated by spontaneity, during childhood as well as adolescence. A suddently enraged parent (father or male elder) may hurl a firebrand at a child, or cuff him roughly about the head and shoulders for as long as the rage lasts. Sometimes real injury results, but there is no planned, coldly calculated punishment, and the anger is usually quickly forgotten. The youngster is never left in doubt when he has transgressed. Retribution comes within a split second. Parents do not hesitate to exercise their authority and to impose their wills, when angered. The youngster soon has a clear conception of what kind of behavior it would be wise to avoid. Thus the youngster is presented, gradually, with a set of values which early become rooted in his personality, and help him to remain, later in life, in tune with his social group and culture pattern.

554 562 Individuals who chafe at the status quo, notably women and/or individuals of either sex who have a talent and urge for individual enterprise, often find their way into the "zar" cult. Cultural participation of the female is so restricted during her life cycle, that many emotional outlets are denied her. Monotonous daily routines of manual labor; two years of breastfeeding after every birth; denial of active participation in the church; deregatory views of female intelligence on the part of the males; etc., limit the Amhara women

562 [554] to an almost sub-culture. The result is at least one real sub-culture, that of the "zar society". Many women find their way to it either through introduction by a female friend, or, if the husband forbids it, through actual or simulated hysteria or catalepsy.

888 Psychological problems of the aged have not as yet become significant in Amhara society. The male elder, and also the old woman, are respected and cared for even in senility - a stage which only a small minority reach because of the comparatively brief life span.

3. Culture Change and Amhara Society: Inertia versus Modernization; the "Change Agent"; the Amharization of Ethiopia; the New Elite; Old Values; Outlook.

178 In view of the traditional hierarchy of government among the Amhara, any major culture changes could be effectively introduced only from the apex downward. This has been the experience during the reigns of the present Emperor Haile Selassie and of his predecessor, Emperor Menelik II; One might even include the unlucky Emperor Theodore. All three recognized the role of the emperor (King of Kings) as "change agent" in culture change. In Ethiopia it has not been the dissatisfied elements who have acted for change.

The forces resisting culture change in that society were and are powerful, not because they have consciously and purposefully banded together in opposition, but by the resistance of inertia. The silent but fierce opposition, notably from the old feudal nobility, the old and dominant heads of the Abyssinian Coptic church, and the rural elders, has long constituted an ultra-conservative immovable object: self-satisfied, fundamentalist, proud of having defended their mountain plateau for centuries, distrustful of foreign innovations.

178 With the gradual increase in their personal and military power, the imperial "change agents" have been able to introduce certain modern reforms. Their direct orders have been fulfilled in haste, as long as they supervised them personally. This was and is in accordance with the old concept of the government hierarchy, according to which the "great man" at the apex must be quickly obeyed as long as he is on the spot. The moment his attention is turned to some other matter, and he is not physically supervising the change, the status quo is largely resumed. In this connection Chapple and Coon's definition of equilibrium is apt:

> "Equilibrium is that state of a system...such that, when a small force is impressed upon it, a change takes place within it, and once this force is removed, the system returns to approximately its previous state."
> (Footnote 137)

Foreign educated students are largaly descendants of the Amhara ruling nobility; although they have been motivated toward certain specific reforms, they fall back into their old noble-family patterns soon after their return.

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643 In order to modernize the country, the Imperial "change agent" is faced with the task of establishing centralized control. For he is not only King of the Amhara, but "King of Kings" of all Ethiopia, a nation still far from homogeneous. Emperor Menelik II started to link the heterogeneous country through military conquest of the Galla and other ethnic entities, and, farsightedly, through the establishment of telegraph and telephone communication with at least his major provincial captials. Emperor Haile Selassie has continued this process, not only through direct orders and proclamations, but by means of the cultural Amharization of Ethiopia.

Footnote 137: Chapple & Coon: Principles of Anthropology, p. 704

563 178 [643 797] Wherever Emperor Menelik II conquered new areas, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he ordered the local people to build Abyssinian Coptic churches, and the Coptic priests who accompanied the troops with the sacred "tabot", consecrated the new local church and parish. These became centers of political and educational Amhara activities. Amharization was advanced not through large scale direct conversion of what was considered by the Amhara clergy a "lower" ethnic group, but through the establishment of a local, administrative, Amhara hierarchy, which the other ethnic peoples found it in their interest to emulate. They soon learned (particularly the old Galla nobility) that they could advance in the Amhara feudal-army system and regain feudal-land-tenure through loyal military service.

[554] By assimilating to this Amhara pattern, young Galla of the old nobility or of the modern-educated élite have found that they can rise in the hierarchy, and, after conversion to the Coptic Abyssinian faith, even intermarry with the ruling class.

At the same time, ethnic particularism and tribal expression of the subject ethnic groups, including the large Galla population, [797] have been consistently discouraged by the ruling Amhara. Even foreign missionaries, who are still forbidden to convert Abyssinian Copts, but may work on Muslims, "pagans", etc, have been pressed into the work of Amharizing Ethiopia. For they must preach in the Amharic language, and can distribute Bibles only in the Amharic language, even in provinces where the vast majority still understands very little or no Amharic. If they break this law, missionairies can be promptly deported.

000 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-

178 645 643 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particularly since his return from exile in 1941, has proceeded to build a base for the modernization of his country through the creation of a modern-educated new élite. The only portfolio he holds personally in his own cabinet is that of Minister of Education (though the other ministers ask his guidance on even the most minute matters). It is this group which is beginning to bridge the gulf between the ethnic cleavages, and which is trying to enlarge Amhara loyalty to an Ethiopian nationalism. Its members give lip service to the still powerful Coptic church: they smoke publicly, but they will break the lenten fast only in secret, eat pork only when not in the public eye, and still refrain from walking arm-in-arm with a female in public. But when sent to the provinces to modernize the administration, they quietly make gradual but cumulative inroads against the temporal power of the church and against the feudal landowning gentry, on the basis of imperial proclamations and numerous directives. (Footnote 138)

643 178 779 This change is only in the initial stages. Some of the most fundamental decisions by the present emperor, notably the abolition of the "gabbar" (serf-like) system, and the measurement and registration of the land, have been most strongly resisted in the old-Amhara provinces, where these edicts have still not been enforced.

As a result, the emperor has often tried to proceed by indirect means. Just as he has utilized the foreign missionaries in his Amharization program, so has he tried to utilize the Abyssinian clergy in his modernization program. He has appointed an Egyptian Coptic clergyman-educator to head the new Theological College of

Footnote 138: For details see: Messing, Simon D.: Changing Ethiopia (in) The Middle East Journal, vol.9, no.4, Autumn 1955, pp. 413-432.

643 Addis Ababa. He has repeatedly urged the Abyssinian clergy to
178 779 take up the practice of preaching in church, on such subjects as
reduction of the violent mourning for the dead and the ruinous
"tazkar" memorial feasts; and admission of women into the church
building. In Addis Ababa, a few modern-style churches have agreed
to do this out of respect for his presence. But the provincial
churches have retained their sacerdotal character and have not,
except on occasions of brief imperial visits, adopted these innovations.
The clergy has also resisted (by means of the "inertia"
previously described) the urgings of the emperor to convert masses
[797] of the "lower" ethnic groups to Coptic Abyssinian Christianity.
Only sporadically have small-scale conversions taken place. The
emperor seems to recognize the value of expanding the nominal State
Religion, Coptic Abyssinian Christianity, to a real national church,
as a pillar of national solidarity and national loyalty.

178 The new élite, small in number, but actively supporting the
212 emperor's policies, and even occasionally beginning to become impatient
with the circumspection and quiet, indirect, subtlety of
Emperor Haile Selassie, has for some years raised the issue of the
simplification of the Amhara alphabet. They had assumed that there
would be much less opposition to such a worthwhile change than to
big issues like abolition of the "gabbar" and changes in land tenure.
The present alphabet, which consists of 259 syllables composed of
37 consonants and a minimum of 7 vowels, makes it difficult to
teach writing to illiterate adults, children, and non-Amharic
speakers, or to design typewriters. But the new, young, modern
elite could not have been more mistaken in their optimism. The
matter became a cause celebre, despite the fact that the proposal,
published in 1948 in an Amharic booklet "Reform of the Alphabet",

178 212 and signed modestly and anonymously "The Friends of Knowledge", had been published under the auspices of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. It had been authored by the Amhara (modern-minded) noble, Ras Imru (later ambassador to the USA), the Amhara historian-grammarian Blatta Marse Hazen, and a Western scholar affiliated with the American National Council of Churches of Christ.

The conflict arose largely from the fact that most Amharic letters are directly derived from the old Geez, considered sacred because church liturgy and literature are written in it. Therefore, the Abyssinian church rejected the idea of alphabet reform as sacrilegeous. The emperor decided to postpone action indefinitely. (footnote 139).

178 563 It is this opposition, concentrated in the old Amhara nobility and clergy that has given opportunity to the loyal Galla to affiliate themselves more closely with the central government. Their modern-educated sons serve in high positions in the imperial bodyguard, army, and provincial administration. By affiliating themselves with the central government, the Galla obtain protection against the exploiting rural Amhara gentry. From the point of view of the modern central government such loyal support is greatly needed. From the point of view of the provincial, traditional Amhara, however, every young modern official sent from Addis Ababa, is now nicknamed "Galla", even if he is an Amhara.

181 178 Meanwhile the new elite has itself developed an indirect means to introduce a new value complex, at least in Addis Ababa. This is called "selṭaney", which formerly meant politeness, refined and re-

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Footnote 139: Leslau, Wolf: La Réforme de l'Alphabet Éthiopien. (in) Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, vol.12,1953,pp.96-106. Rome.

181 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the con-
178 notation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved
[562] status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the
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644 hierarchy where the prime"change agent", the emperor, resides. Most notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenat" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenat" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Gugsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

178 cal needs, and the comparatively rich and complex non-material culture satisfies the need for interpersonal relations and expression. The returning foreign-educated students are still few compared to the size of the population, so that they immediately obtain high positions commensurate with their training, and are therefore generally well satisfied. Until the industrial age brings a cash economy and a modern appreciation of mechanical skills to Ethiopia, Amhara culture will probably remain in its present equilibrium. Meanwhile, however, the Amharization of all Ethiopia is continuing gradually, and can be expected eventually to attain the goal of a culturally homogeneous, predominantly Amhara, nation.